FULL OF GRACE AND TRUTH:
THE SACRAMENTAL ECONOMY
ACCORDING TO THOMAS AQUINAS

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Thesis submitted to the University of Nottingham for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

July 2013

ABSTRACT

Full of Grace and Truth: The Sacramental Economy according to Thomas Aquinas

Neo-Thomism misread Aquinas by trying to find in him answers to questions posed by Descartes and Kant, producing a theology that people like Chauvet rightly abandoned. This thesis, on the other hand, proposes a decidedly pre-modern reading of Thomas. It begins with two basic structures of Thomas' thought - a threefold notion of truth (so that truth is ontological as well as epistemological), and an understanding of *exitus-reditus* that shows its links to "archaic" concepts such as the *hau* of the Maori. Then it considers human life in terms of merit and thus "economy," (exchange of valuables); but this economy is a gift economy, and here we consider the gift in the light of Seneca (whom Thomas took as an authority) and Mauss, as well as using Allard's insights into how debt, particularly debt to God, generates what in Thomas takes the place of the Cartesian subject. In this light grace is seen as the spirit of the gift with which God graces us, giving rise to gratitude.

We then consider Christ as graced and gracing us, first of all by our configuration to him in the sacraments (using the analogy of clothes), followed by a conformation in grace. We look at this in baptism and penance, but then we take the Eucharist as a three-fold sign, and show how it generates in us faith, hope and love. The unity of the sacrament as a gift is emphasised, and the cases of its division, such as fiction, the *votum sacramenti*, and circumcision are examined. As a Jew, Derrida gives insight into grace before the coming of Christ and the value of the sacrifice of Abraham, and in this way we can see how Thomas circumvents Derrida's critique of the gift. Finally we compare Thomas with Chauvet.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I begin by thanking my parents, František and Anna Vnuk, who instilled in me a love of learning and who have been supportive through the years. Next I thank: my previous provincial, fr Thomas Cassidy OP, and the current provincial, fr Kevin Saunders OP, who gave me the time to do the doctorate; the regent, fr Mark O'Brien OP, who gave me the inclination; and the provincial bursar, fr Anthony Walsh OP, who made available the money. Recognition should also go to Dr David Coffey, who set an essay question on *ex opere operato* that was the seed for the this doctorate, and to the class of Melanesian seminarians to whom I taught the Sacrament of Marriage in 2005, who by their insistence on the retention of brideprice taught me to imagine an alternative approach to economies.

In Nottingham I would like to thank Bishop Malcolm McMahon OP for providing accommodation at the cathedral presbytery, and the past and present deans, Rev Michael Brown and Rev Geoff Hunton, who have made me welcome over the years, as well as the other cathedral priests, the sisters of the Little Company of Mary, the parishioners of the Cathedral, St Augustine's and Our Lady and St Patrick's parishes, especially Anne Armstrong, who has done her best to ensure that I do not waste away. I have also enjoyed the pastoral care of Rev Chris Thomas, the Nottingham University chaplain, and the fellowship of the Catholic Students Association.

Very sincere thanks are also due to my supervisor, John Milbank, for getting me to read Seneca and for all his other advice and support over the four years; similarly I would like to thank my co-supervisor, Conor Cunningham. The academic staff within the Theology and Religious Studies Department have been welcoming and supportive, and special thanks are due to the head of department, Karen Kilby.

Dominican priories across Europe have made me welcome and often I have made use of their libraries: thanks are due to the communities at Oxford, Leicester, Cambridge, London, Warsaw, Kraków, Fribourg and Toulouse.

Various people have helped to chase up articles or books for me: fratres Austin Milner OP (RIP), Richard Conrad OP, Robert Krishna OP, Martin Wallace OP, and Rev Dominic Robinson SJ. For his efforts to check all my references to Thomas, fr Gregory Murphy OP deserves a special mention, as do my proof-readers, fr Paul Rowse OP, Aaron Riches and Paul Mees.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 How do we read Thomas today?

1.1.1 Paradigm change in sacramental theology

> "*How did it come about that, when attempting to comprehend theologically the sacramental relation with God expressed most fully under the term 'grace,' the Scholastics (and here we will consider only Thomas Aquinas) singled out for privileged consideration the category of 'cause'?*"[1]

Thus begins Louis-Marie Chauvet's *Symbol and Sacrament*, the book that probably best expresses what might be called the paradigm change in Catholic sacramental theology since the Second Vatican Council - and the critique of Thomas continues throughout the volume.[2] And so we must ask: given this paradigm change, how are we to continue to use the Scholastics (and here we will consider only Thomas Aquinas) in sacramental theology?

The notion of paradigm change originated in the field of the history of the natural sciences, and its application to the practice of theology is not without complications. Paradigm change, as Thomas Kuhn understands it, is different from normal science or, in our case, normal theology. It occurs when the current orthodoxy is no longer working, when the practitioners are increasingly dealing not with the discipline's proper external object, but with questions raised from within by their own terminology, and when there is a proliferation of explanations, none of them truly satisfying.[3] The new paradigm shows its superiority by providing better

1 Louis-Marie Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament: A Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence*, tr. Patrick Madigan and Madeleine Beaumont (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1995), 7.

2 Originally published as *Symbole et sacrement: une relecture sacramentelle de l'existence chrétienne* (Paris: Cerf, 1987).

3 Thomas S Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1996), 82-83.

solutions to a wide range of problems, and rendering the previously problematic question superfluous, and the way it achieves this becomes its own model of problem solving.[4] Once the new paradigm is established, the elements that characterised the old paradigm - Ptolemaic epicycles, phlogiston, the ether - are relegated to the status of historical curiosities, and the writings of the old paradigm are irrelevant to the practitioners of the new, although scientists have a tendency to create a linear history of their discipline, with selected heroes from the times of earlier paradigms, to whom are attributed notions they could not have held.[5]

I want to sugggest that the change in sacramental theology did involve an aporia with a proliferation of unsatisfactory attempts at solution, but also to argue that, because of the nature of the discipline, theology cannot cut itself off from its past nor so easily rewrite its history. Rather, paradigm change in theology involves a new way of reading the documents of the past, and thus we need to find a new way of reading Thomas.

1.1.2 The aporia of sacramental causality

If paradigm change renders the problems of the previous paradigm superfluous, then it is no surprise that the aporia of the old sacramental theology was how sacraments caused grace, precisely the thing Chauvet declares outdated in his opening sentence. Bernard Leeming notes five sorts of theories, some having a number of variants, and further adds to the confusion for, although not wishing to be an innovator, comments "It is legitimate in so disputable a matter, to suggest modifications to the view of others."[6]

4 Kuhn, *Scientific Revolutions*, 78.
5 Kuhn, *Scientific Revolutions*, 137-139.
6 Bernard Leeming, *Principles of Sacramental Theology*, 2nd ed. (London: Longmans, 1960), 287-

The basic problem was taken to be how can something bodily, like a sacrament, cause something spiritual like grace.[7] Thomas had appealed to instrumental causality: just as the axe, performing its own action of cutting, forms a bed because it is moved by the carpenter, and the form of the bed flows from the carpenter's mind through the axe to make the bed, so also baptismal water performs its own action of washing the body, but, being moved by God, it also cleanses the soul.[8] "Perfective physical causality" suggested that this is through some passing ontological enhancement of the water;[9] it is difficult to reconcile this with Thomas' clear statement that baptism is achieved through the water's proper action. "Occasional causality" began with sacraments as signs and talked of the washing as a sign of God's command to give grace;[10] but Thomas quite clearly denied this approach.[11] "Moral causality" found something of value or merit in the sacrament that moved God to bestow grace, for instance, that baptismal character gives a right to grace;[12] this would contradict grace's absolute gratuity. "Dispositive physical causality" held that the natural effects of the sacrament disposed to grace, as the natural effects of the parents' acts dispose the *conceptus* to the infusion of a soul from God; [13] "dispositive intentional causality" holds that "sacraments express the divine intention to sanctify, and by expressing it produce the sanctity expressed."[14] Against both these views we can note that, although Thomas had held some sort of

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7 Leeming, *Sacramental Theology*, 284.

8 *Summa Theologiae* III.62.1 cor, ad 2. In the notes to follow, the abbreviation ST will be used.

9 Leeming, *Sacramental Theology*, 288-289. Leeming suggests Cajetan took this approach.

10 Leeming, *Sacramental Theology*, 287

11 ST III.62.1 cor.

12 Leeming would also include Odo Casel's *Mysteriengegenwart* in this category , *Sacramental Theology*, 287-288. More explicit examples of character as a right to grace are John M Donahue, "Sacramental Character: the State of the Question." *The Thomist* 31.4 (October 1967): 464, and Toshiyuki Miyakawa, "The Ecclesial Meaning of the "Res et Sacramentum," *The Thomist* 31.4 (October 1967): 440.

13 Leeming, *Sacramental Theology*, 289.

14 Leeming, *Sacramental Theology*, 289-290.

dispositive causality in the *Scriptum*, he rejected it in the *Summa*.[15] Besides, many of these solutions were seen as excessively mechanical or juridical, out of place in a religion of personal love; many theologians sought a "personalist" approach.[16] In all the confusion, one was tempted to say that baptism is a mystery, a miracle even;[17] but Thomas insists that the justification of the sinner, although a greater work than creating the world, is not miraculous.[18]

The situation was ripe for a totally new approach.

1.1.2 Alternative approaches

The writings of Edward Schillebeeckx are one example among many of the change that was happening. In 1952 he published the first volume of a planned two volume work on the sacraments, taking Thomas as an authority but also closely studying the patristic sources, so as to interpret Thomas in the light of the tradition that he himself received.[19] The first volume dealt with sacramental character. The second volume, however, which was to explain how sacraments confer grace, never appeared. Instead in 1958 there was a much smaller work, which, while often citing Thomas as an authority, from its very title proclaimed that it was taking a different and more "personalist" approach, that of encounter.[20] This seemed to resonate: for a

15 Hyacinthe-François Dondaine, "À propos d'Avicenne et de saint Thomas: de la causalité dispositive à la causalité instrumentale," *Revue Thomiste* 51 (1951): 441-453.

16 Colman O'Neill, *Sacramental Realism: a General Theory of the Sacraments* (Dominican Publications: Dublin, 1983), 16-17.

17 Leeming, *Sacramental Theology*, 352.

18 ST I-II.113.10 cor.

19 Edward Schillebeeckx OP, *De sacramentele Heilseconomie: theologische bezinning op S. Thomas' sacramentenleer in het licht van de traditie en van de hedendaagse sacraments problematiek* (Antwerp: H. Nelissen, 1952). I have used the French translation, *L'économie sacramentelle du salut: Réflexion théologique sur la doctrine sacramentaire de saint Thomas, à la lumière de la tradition et de la problématique sacramentelle contemporaine*, tr. Yvon van der Have, OSB (Fribourg: Academic Press, 2004).

20 Edward Schillebeeckx, *Christus, Sacrament van de Godsonmoeting* (Bilthoven: H. Nelissen, 1958, revised edtion in 1959); English translation: *Christ the Sacrament of the Encounter with God*, tr. Paul Barrett OP, assisted by Mark Schoof OP and Laurence Bright OP (New York: Sheed & Ward,

few examples, the theme is noticeable in the work of Herbert Vorgrimler;[21] Regis Duffy sees it as important in the works of contemporary "Rahnerian" theologians;[22] in its more friendly form of "meeting" it even appears in book titles.[23] However, as a first attempt it had its weaknesses.[24]

Alongside this there was the increasing emphasis on the Church in sacramental theology. Henri de Lubac established that in the Fathers the term *corpus Christi mysticum* referred to the Eucharist, and the *corpus Christi verum* referred to the Church, but by the 12th century the referents were swapped.[25] Previously, therefore, the focus of the Eucharistic celebration had been the building up of the ecclesial body of Christ, now it had become the relationship between the individual believer and God. There was a loss of sense of community and the role of the community in the sacraments, theologians complained, and they tried to reclaim it. Among those following these trends, the idea was established that Christ was the fundamental sacrament, and that he gave us the Church as the sacrament, in which we have the seven sacraments.[26] Sacraments were increasingly looked at in terms of their relation to the Church, and as establishing status in the Church.[27] Thus the view

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1963).

21 Herbert Vorgrimler, *Sacramental Theology*, tr. Linda M Maloney (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1994), 73, 80.

22 He refers to Theodor Schneider, *Zeichen der Nähe Gottes: Grundriss des Sakramententheologie* (Mainz: Grünewald, 1987) and Lothar Lies, *Sakramententheologie Eine personale Sicht* (Graz: Styria, 1990). David N Power, Regis A Duffy and Kevin W Irwin, "Sacramental Theology: A Review of the Literature," *Theological Studies* 55.4 (1994): 665-666.

23 Colman O'Neill, *Meeting Christ in the Sacraments*, rev. Romanus Cessario OP (New York: Alba House, 1991).

24 Alexandre Ganoczy comments that Schillebeeckx' "encounter theories" applied the "personalistic" approach too quickly and did not take into account all the complexities of communication, particularly a full theory of symbols. *An Introduction to Catholic Sacramental Theology*, tr. William Thomas and Anthony M Sherman (New York: Paulist, 1984), 148-149, 156-164. A summary can be found at Power, Duffy and Irwin, "Sacramental Theology," 671-672.

25 Henri de Lubac, *Corpus Mysticum: the Eucharist and the Church in the Middle Ages: a Historical Survey*, 2nd ed., tr. Gemma Simmonds, (London: SCM Press, 2006).

26 As one example, this was held before the council by Leeming, *Sacramental Theology* 351.

27 Miyakawa names as proponents of this view: Matthias Scheeben, Émile Mersch, Otto Semmelroth, Karl Rahner, Bernard Leeming, P Smulders, Edward Schillebeeckx, J Fuchs, PF Palmer, C McAuliffe, J Lhoir and R Masi. "The Ecclesial Meaning," 387n 14.

was becoming more widespread that, with the sacrament of penance, the *res et sacramentum* was not something related solely to the individual (like Thomas' *paenitentia interior*), but reconciliation with the Church.[28]

Although such theologians met with some resistance, their views gradually gained currency, and they considered certain statements of Vatican II - especially "the Church is in the nature of a sacrament" - as supporting their position.[29] Karl Rahner takes the statement that in the sacrament of penance an additional reconciliation of the sinner takes place with the Church herself as a virtual vindication of his position on the *res et sacramentum* of penance.[30] In this period of change and flux, what had been one of the crucial questions of sacramental theology before the council was now considered irrelevant. Thus Bernard Häring, who treats Thomas as a respected authority, nonetheless declares that we can no longer consider sacraments according to the category of cause.[31]

1.1.3 The establishment of a new paradigm

Chauvet's *Symbol and Sacrament*, published a little over twenty years

28 For a history, see Gilles Emery, "Reconciliation with the Church and Interior Penance: The Contribution of Thomas Aquinas to the Question on the *Res et Sacramentum* of Penance," tr. Robert E Williams, in *Trinity, Church and the Human Person* (Naples FA: Sapientia Press, 2007), 174-182.

29 *Lumen Gentium* 1. Benoît-Dominique de la Soujeole gives one account of the effect of these statements. "Questions actuelles sur la sacramentalité," *Revue Thomiste* 99 (1999), 484-485.

30 *Lumen Gentium* 11, as discussed by Karl Rahner, "Penance as an Additional Act of Reconciliation with the Church," in *Theological Investigations*, vol. 10 (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1973), 125-149. There is a tendency after a council for theologians to see recognition of part of their position as establishing their whole position as accepted. Robert Daley points out that Bellarmine and his colleagues saw themselves as justified in developing theories of Eucharistic sacrifice that far exceeded what Trent had defined, and then - quite unwittingly - shows that contemporary theologians of Eucharistic sacrifice are doing the same thing in a different direction after Vatican II. "Robert Bellarmine and Post-Tridentine Eucharistic Theology," *Theological Studies* 61.2 (June 2000): 239-260.

31 Bernard Häring, *The Sacraments in a Secular Age: A Vision in Depth on Sacramentality and its Impact on Moral Life* (Slough: St Paul, 1976), 97.

after the council, may be taken to represent the moment when the movement had come of age. Chauvet's approach builds upon the emphasis on the Church we mentioned above: sacraments are about giving people a place within the worshipping community. Relying upon contemporary theories of social status, symbolic exchange and subjectivity, he shows how sacraments mediate new relationships, moving us from servile fear of God to filial love, and making us brothers and sisters of each other - with a corresponding new set of rights and obligations. Grace is not an independent thing, but lies within the new status with its freedom and demands. He avoids the Scylla of an *ex opere operato* approach in which people rely upon the grace they gain in the sacraments and neglect love of neighbour, and the Charybdis of a social activism whereby the sacraments merely testify to what the community has achieved; he also provides insight into numerous pastoral problems, particularly those arising from a period of liturgical, ecclesial and social flux.

Much of what Chauvet says is not original with him, nor would everyone looking for an alternative to the standard pre-conciliar theology agree with him.[32] He is overly reliant on Heidegger, and some find his explanation of the Eucharist inadequate.[33] A number of Thomists have taken issue with him on his interpretation of Thomas.[34] Nonetheless, the synthesis he entitled "a sacramental reinterpretation of

32 See, for instance, Yves Labbé, "Réceptions théologiques de la postmodernité: à propos de deux livres récents de G. Lafont et L.-M. Chauvet," *Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Theologiques* 72 (1988): 397-426.

33 Laurence Paul Hemming, "After Heidegger: Transubstantiation*," Heythrop Journal* 41.2 (April 2000): 170-186.

34 Liam G. Walsh OP, "The Divine and the Human in St. Thomas's Theology of the Sacraments," in *Ordo Sapientiae et Amoris: Image et message de saint Thomas d'Aquin à travers les récents études historiques, herméneutiques, et doctrinales: homage au professeur Jean-Pierre Torrell OP à l'occasion de son 65e anniversaire*, ed. Carlos-Josaphat Pinto de Oliveira OP (Fribourg: Éditions Universitaires, 1993), 321-352; Thierry-Dominique Humbert OP, "Note sur la cause efficiente et l'onto-théologie," *Revue Thomiste* 105 (2005): 5-24; Bernhard Blankenhorn OP, "The Instrumental Causality of the Sacraments: Thomas Aquinas and Louis-Marie Chauvet," *Nova et Vetera,* English Edition, 4.2 (2006): 255–94. The Dominicans of Toulouse held a colloquium on Chauvet on 15 October 2011; the papers will be published in a forthcoming issue of *Revue Thomiste.*

Christian existence" showed that the new theoretical approach entailed by the rejection of sacramental causality produced a theology that more easily dealt with many other difficulties within the older orthodoxy, as one would expect from a new paradigm. Both his followers and his opponents witness that he is the writer in sacramental theology who must be taken into account.[35]

1.2 How to read Thomas

1.2.1 The need to read Thomas

But theology is not one of the natural sciences; rather, it depends upon a revelation that took place in history and that is mediated to us through the successive generations of the Church. As Chauvet himself makes clear, we understand what the sacraments are by understanding the place they had in the life of the Church (and in the Church's own reflection on that life) over the centuries;[36] thus, as an integral part of his method, he accepts the Scholastics as authoritative bearers of that tradition.[37] Nonethless, our thought patterns have been formed by the natural sciences. As Liam Walsh observes, the sustained attack would lead a reader to think that to adopt this sacramental theology one must abandon Thomas - and that this is a theological move worth making.[38]

1.2.2 Neo-Thomism as a flawed reading of Thomas

35 As Nathan Lefler points out, there are also Thomists who continue to operate as if nothing had happened. "Sign, Cause and Person in St. Thomas's Sacramental Theology: Further Considerations," *Nova et Vetera* (English Edition) 4 .2 (2006): 399-400. But when such people refer to substantial attacks on Thomas' sacramental theology, it is Chauvet they mention - even if only to dismiss him in a footnote. For example, Anselm Kyongsuk Min, *Paths to the Triune God: An Encounter Between Aquinas and Recent Theologians* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 2005) 96n 83.

36 Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 185-186, 204-212, 377-382.

37 Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 379-380, 383-387,

38 Walsh, "The Divine and the Human ," 326n 15.

If each generation of theologians is re-reading and re-writing their predecessors, an aporia may arise when changes in the wider world may impede the "translation" of the older texts. This is clearly the case of much of the interpretation of Thomas since the Enlightenment, but more particularly since the "Thomistic revival" initiated by Leo XIII's encyclical *Aeterni Patris*. Thomas was seen as an antidote against modern philosophy. Scholars such as Mark Jordan argue that although Thomas never calls any Christian a "philosophus," many Thomists tried to find in Thomas "a Thomistic philosophy, and especially a Thomistic ethics, independent of revelation," and that they attempted "to resist, coopt, or outdo modern epistemologies."39 In particular, in order to gain credibility among their philosophical contemporaries, they claimed that this autonomous philosophy was based on the thought of a recognised non-Christian philosopher, Aristotle. But, as we shall see, not only does Thomas seem to regard the Stoics as better ethicists than Aristotle, but his whole ethical system renders any action worthless unless it is motivated by infused charity, and the final incentives for action are gifts that go beyond the rational. Jordan points out that Thomas even rejects Aristotle's philosophical definition of virtue, preferring a theological one from Augustine, and that in doing so he is "judging human life otherwise than Aristotle did. Thomas has changed philosophical water into theological wine."40 Similarly, argues Jordan, Thomas takes the category of cause and applies it to situations never envisaged by Aristotle (specifically the sacraments), thereby reversing "the analogy of 'cause' as he

39 Mark Jordan, *Rewritten Theology: Aquinas after his readers* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 87. Cf Fergus Kerr OP, *After Aquinas: Versions of Thomism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 17-21. The young Joseph Ratzinger's distaste for the Thomism he was fed in the seminary is well-known. Tracey Rowland, *Ratzinger's Faith: The Theology of Pope Benedict XVI* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 2-7.

40 Mark Jordan, *Rewritten Theology*, 163.

did with 'virtue.'"[41] In this light, it is hardly surprising that the ship of neo-Thomism should have run aground on the shoals of sacramental causality.

1.2.3 Reclaiming what all want to explain away

Theology must continue to read the Scholastics, and therefore it needs a new paradigm with which to do so. And the key to a new paradigm is to ask what was most difficult in the old reading - not what the theologians had the greatest difficulty explaining, which is normally just a symptom of the problem, but what they most readily explained away. And the answer is Anselm's theory of satisfaction and, more generally, the whole notion of payment as it occurs in mediaeval theology: as Gisbert Greshake remarks, there is probably no other theological theory so passionately disputed.[42] And when Thomas presents his version of it, even his supporters find it difficult to cope. When Thomas appeals to the satisfactory death of Christ as the source of the efficacy of the sacraments, Ghislain Lafont laments that we could have expected "more and better."[43] Romanus Cessario maintains of satisfaction that this "basic perspective may appear alien at first;" but after devoting a whole book to Thomas' treatment, he concludes "if the term 'satisfaction' cannot be restored to current usage, then certainly the substance of St Thomas's understanding of satisfaction can and should be."[44] Nonetheless, given that, for Cessario, the substance here is love, we are left asking why Thomas introduced the notion of satisfaction in the first place. As long as we are trying to explain away something

41 Mark Jordan, *Rewritten Theology*, 168.
42 Gisbert Greshake, "Erlösung und Freiheit: Zur neuinterpretation der Erlösunglehre Anselms von Canterbury," *Theologische Quartalschrift* 153 (1973): 323.
43 Ghislain Lafont OSB, *Structures et méthode dans la Somme Théologique de saint Thomas d'Aquin* (Bruges: Desclée de Brouwer, 1961), 452.
44 Romanus Cessario, *The Godly Image: Christ and Salvation in Catholic Thought from Anselm to Aquinas* (Petersham MA: St Bede's, 1990), xvi, 204.

that Thomas found so central, we remain aliens to his theological thinking, and therefore should not be surprised that, somewhere down the line, what he says on another topic, such as sacramental causality, seems hopelessly obscure.

1.2.4 A pre-modern reading of Thomas

If the problem with neo-Thomism was that it tried to force the mediaeval Thomas into a Cartesian or Kantian mould, then we need a pre-modern reading of Thomas. And so I shall, for instance, interpret "spirit" keeping in mind the way he uses it to explain the evil eye and human reproduction, follow him in understanding the gift in the light of Seneca, develop his ideas of subject according to the categories of Roman law, and consider the role "honour" played within mediaeval feudalism. Further, to understand these concepts more deeply, I shall go back to their roots in tribal and "archaic" societies, relying upon anthropologists such as Marcel Mauss and Julian Pitt-Rivers. Above all, I shall give an "economic" reading of Thomas, one in which notions such as payment, price, debt, earning (merit) and satisfaction are central.

When we do this, we discover that Thomas' theological project is surprisingly similar to Chauvet's. Both have a notion of a subject constructed by symbolic exchange, both have a similar understanding of the gift and therefore of grace. Constructive dialogue between the two becomes much easier. In fact, instead of Chauvet finding fault with Thomas, Thomas will be able to show up the shortcomings of Chauvet arguing from within Chauvet's own presuppositions. In order to have a dialogue, we need to understand the positions of both. A condensed version of Chauvet's approach will take up the remainder of this chapter. And then,

since we are giving a re-reading of Thomas, and since he, and not Chauvet is the subject of this thesis, we can devote seven and a half chapters to the Angelic Doctor, trying to do it from within his own terms and not Chauvet's, although making references to similarities or contrasts where apposite.

1.2.5 The plan of this thesis

To understand Thomas, I shall begin chapter two with the pair "grace and truth" as Thomas explains them in his commentary upon John, and then (allowing for some slippage between the words "grace" and "spirit") show the fundamental role that these terms have in Thomas' theology: in how he reads the Bible, and in the macro-structure and micro-structure of the *Summa*. With some help from Philipp Rosemann, the coming forth and return of creatures in *Prima Pars* will be shown not to be "productionist" but very pre-modern, more like Jacques Derrida's *production donatrice*, and radically concerned with honour and glory.

Chapter three will take the issue of merit, which frames *Prima Secundae*, exploring how merit implies an economy, looking at the relation between a carnal and a spiritual economy, and between the economy of reward and that of punishment.

Chapter four will focus on the tract on justice in *Secunda Secundae*. With a little help from Maxime Allard, it will start with debt, religion and subjectivity, and then move on to gratitude and the gift, exploring Thomas' clear dependence on Seneca, with some valuable assistance from Marcel Mauss.

Then, noting that Thomas' first term for gratitude is *gratia*, chapter five will return to *Prima Secundae* to look at the three-fold reality Thomas also calls *gratia*. Here we shall see how the changes in Thomas' position on grace all converge to

make it more like the *hau* or the spirit of the gift as we find it in Mauss. This will be amply supported from the scriptural commentaries.

We shall begin to look at *Tertia Pars* in chapter six, starting with the grace of Christ, and then his merit and his "subjectivity." Going through the mysteries of his life, we shall prepare ourselves to see how we are "clothed" with Christ in baptism, sharing his "subjectivity" in the one *persona mystica*. The other sacrament closely studied here is penance.

Baptism only works through its ordination towards the Eucharist, which will be the topic of chapter seven. Exploring its past, present and future signification along the lines of the three-fold liberation that truth brings, we shall see how the symbolism of the Eucharist works to take us from a carnal to a spiritual economy.

In chapter eight we shall bring all this to bear on the very condensed explanation of the causation of grace by the sacraments, in the *Summa Theologiae*, and also look at those situations ("revival," the *votum sacramenti*, and circumcision) where the reception of the gift object is separated from the bestowal of grace. Jacques Derrida, as a Jew, shall help us understand what Thomas says about circumcision, which will also give us a chance to evaluate his extremely influential critique of the gift. And then, in conclusion, we can compare Thomas and Chauvet, and see what is the benefit to Thomas' theology in talking about sacramental grace in terms of cause.

But first let us look at Chauvet.

1.3 The sacramental theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet

Symbol and sacrament can be considered as a polemical work, striving

against the reification of grace. Therefore he begins by constructing a space wherein to speak of grace, and in that place he looks at the sacraments.

1.3.1 Grace as a non-object

Chapters one and two, therefore, centre around a hinge, which is Chauvet's comparison of grace with manna. In an evocative allegorical reading, Chauvet presents us with grace as the non-object, with no quiddity, whose very name (What is that?) is a question. It is subject neither to measuring nor storage nor valuation, and melts under the gaze of the sun. (44-45)[45]

It is because of this view of grace that Chauvet rejects Thomas' understanding of sacraments as causes of grace, for he holds that causality is so linked with the ontotheology endemic in western thought that, despite all the cautions and qualifications of the scholastics, it will (almost?) inevitably result in thinking of grace as a thing. (7-9) Chauvet notes that, in an advance on his position in the *Scriptum*, in the *Summa* Thomas defines sacraments in terms, not of cause, but of sign, but then notes that in the next question cause returns - "et avec quelle force!"[46] In the second chapter, therefore, Chauvet looks to Heidegger and his critique of metaphysics for an alternative point of departure. Of course, Heidegger does not talk of God, but of Being (or ~~Being~~), Being that reveals itself to *Dasein* through language, and reveals itself in its withdrawal and its absence. (74) Here Chauvet sees a certain homology with grace, for "this movement of donation can only be welcomed graciously in an attitude of "letting-enter-into-presence," where the accent fall not on the presence itself but on the letting as "*letting* the coming-into-presence." "(61)

45 For the remainder of this chapter, numbers in brackets will refer to pages in the English edition of Chauvet's *Symbol and Sacrament*.

46 Chauvet, *Symbole et sacrement*, 18 (*Symbol and Sacrament*, 12)

This stepping outside of metaphysics cannot be totally achieved, and so the project is an always unfinished one, and thus a way that makes itself, a "*be-wëgender Weg*." (54) Chauvet also finds an interesting parallel in the unfinished subject of Lacanian psychoanalysis. Here the subject is not ontologically given, but always in need of construction. (77-82)

1.3.2 Grace as gratuity in exchange

Chauvet has now expressed his search in terms of becoming a subject, and for both linguistic and psychoanalytic reasons he sees this as being achieved through language or symbolic exchange, and this is the focus of chapters three and four.

Following Marcel Mauss and his *Essay on the Gift*, Chauvet distinguishes between commercial exchange and symbolic exchange. In the former the items exchanged have a use value, and the exchange attempts to equate the value of the objects exchanged; it is the objects exchanged in themselves that matter. (100-107) In symbolic exchange what is exchanged (or generated by the exchange) is the identity as subjects of the parties to the exchange and alliances between them. The object of exchange is of secondary value in itself. In archaic societies there is a constant movement of objects in exchange; each object is given as a "gift," but a return-gift is obligatory. (101-103)

In our modern consumer society the gift in a certain way survives as that which resists the "imperialism of value." (103) But we are continually trying to establish our identity through the purchase of commodities, attempting to buy not the thing, but the idea attached to the thing. (104-105)

It is in such a world that Chauvet wants us to understand grace, and

particularly sacramental grace. Like the manna, it has no value and is not a thing. It is marked by a certain excess or super-abundance. It is both gracious and gratuitous, but the gratuity does not deny the possibility of the return gift; indeed, to do so would be to suffocate the recipient, to make the recipient into an object. (108-109)

> We said above that every gift obligates; there is no reception of anything *as a gift* which does not require some return-gift as a sign of gratitude, at the very least a "thank you" or some facial expression. Which is to say that by the very structure of the exchange, the gratuitousness of the gift *carries the obligation of the return-gift of a response*. Therefore, theologically, grace requires not only this initial gratuitousness on which everything else depends but also the *graciousness of the whole circuit*, and especially of the return-gift. This graciousness qualifies the return-gift as beyond-price, without calculation - in short, as a response of love. *Even the return-gift of our human response thus belongs to the theologically Christian concept of "grace."* (108-109)

Hence infant baptism is not the best example of grace. (109)

> Grace must be treated as something outside the boundaries of value, according to the symbolic mode of communication, and in the first place communication of the word. Rather than being represented as an object-value that one would "refine" through analogy, the "treasure" is really not separable from the *symbolic labor* by which the subject itself bears fruit by becoming a believer. (109)

Having come to this conclusion by considering gifts, Chauvet now approaches it by considering symbols, and we can observe a certain parallel. Just as there is commercial exchange and gift exchange, so also there is communication by signs and by symbols. (111) Both signs and symbols, of course, only work as part of a larger system: to accept the sign/symbol is to accept the order that gives it meaning. (115) Signs convey information, and speech at this level is *locutionary* and can be true or false; symbols convey recognition and social status, and speech at this level is *illocutionary*, and can be valid or invalid, depending on the social standing of the speaker.[47] (132-135) The symbol is not an ornament added to the sign, or a degenerate form of the sign - which would make it less "real." (123) Rather, as

47 There is also a third level, the *perlocutionary*, which, through symbols, generates an external, non-symbolic effect: Chauvet gives some examples of healing rites from the anthropological literature. (135-139)

symbolic exchange is what constitutes the "I", it touches us at our deepest level. The sign and the symbol are two poles of language, and all communication relies to a certain extent upon both. But this also means that all "reality" is also at the same time symbolic. This leads Chauvet to claim that "Water never comes so close to its "truth" as when it functions as both sepulcher of death and bath of rebirth." (123)

Chauvet uses the idea of "*intra-linguistic* efficacy" to begin to explain sacramental grace, because coming forth as a subject, in filial or fraternal alliance, is precisely the sort of effect that symbolic exchange achieves. But divine grace cannot be reduced to a mere anthropological reality. It is "an *extra-linguistic* reality, but [. . .] comprehensible only on the (intra-linguistic) model of the filial and brotherly and sisterly alliance established *outside of us (extra nos)*, in Christ. Once again, despite grammar, 'grace' is not a thing, but a symbolic work or 'perlaboration.'" (140)

Relying upon Derrida's position that metaphysics regards writing as the mere reduplication of the spoken word, which is more immediate, more "present" (144), Chauvet reminds us that the symbol, like the body, resists attempts to sweep away mediation and contingency. These are not remedies or concessions (154), signs waiting to be decoded. Rather, it is fundamental that "*the most 'spiritual' happens through the most 'corporeal'*." (146) Similarly, the body cannot be eliminated; as Nietzsche says: *Leib bin ich, ganz und gar, und nichts ausserdem*. "Body am I, entirely and completely, and nothing besides."(149) Because of this, grace takes place through sacraments, and Christian faith is sacramental in its constitution, and not by derivation. (155)

1.3.3 Sacraments thought within symbolic exchange

In the second section of his book, Chauvet then places sacraments in the symbolic network of the faith of the Church. Becoming a believer, like becoming a subject, is an always unfinished task. (178) One way of looking at it is to consider faith (which takes place in the Church) as based around three interconnected poles: scripture, sacraments and ethics (172). Faith, as Chauvet explains with reference to the Emmaus story, means accepting that our relationship with Jesus is always mediated by a symbol, which makes him present in his absence, and this absence must be assented to. To seek the fulness of presence in the symbol is to seek a body that can only be dead: it is a necrotic temptation. (161-171)

Scripture is explained in terms of this symbolic exchange. Constitutionally, it is formed in the liturgical assembly, canonized by the Church whose symbolic structure mediates our assent in faith. The text gives information, as it must, but it never stops there: it is not an idol, but an icon. (216-220) "The letter [. . .] can be the mediation of the revelation of God only to the extent that, as Beauchamp emphasized, it forms *figures*. [. . .] *only by splitting itself in two*." (218) Meaning is never mastered, because the subject, constituted by language, is always split - otherness is the place where meaning arises. (205-206)

In Chapter Seven Chauvet considers the relationship between sacraments and ethics. Jewish ritual was about remembering a foundational past event so that a new future becomes possible. (233-234) Hence the prophets criticize the cult when it is divorced from the ethical. (238-239) Christianity is eschatological, not simply awaiting a coming that will annul all intervening history, but seeing all history as the possibility of this coming. (240) It is Jesus who makes the eschatological difference;

he himself is the thanksgiving. (250) In the New Testament, liturgical terms apply either to Jewish liturgy, Jesus himself, or Christian everyday life, but not to Christian worship. (254) The move is from sacralisation (removing something from the profane) to sanctification of the profane. (262)

Similarly, in Chapter Eight Chauvet views the exchange of gifts that takes place in the Eucharist as ultimately about the worshippers receiving the gift of themselves, in order that they can worthily praise God - in other words, the establishment of the Church. This is built around the notion of each gift needing to be received and evoking a counter-gift, and notes that, within the Eucharistic prayer, the moment when we offer the sacrament to God, our dispossession, is actually the moment of our reception of the gift as gift and therefore as obliging the return gift. This "cultic offering is only the *symbolic representation of a return-gift yet to be 'veri-fied' elsewhere*" (in ethical behaviour). (276, my underlining). "Because grace is outside the order of value, it is in rendering to God God's own grace, Jesus Christ given in the sacrament, that the Church receives it," for "the appropriation of this no-object that is 'grace' can only occur under the mode of disappropriation." And once again, this is work, the "labor of an unceasing 'pass-over' from the oldness that threatens it to the newness it proclaims accomplished in Christ." (287) As an example of this newness, Chauvet shows that the sacrifice of Christ is "a quite singular sacrifice" (302). It is not "non-sacrifice", as Girard would have it; the term "sacrifice" must be retained, for Christ's sacrifice turns sacrifice around and is perhaps an anti-sacrifice. (307) God does not need the sacrifice, as Irenaeus says, but asks us to sacrifice to teach us how to be grateful. (311-312)

1.3.4 The symbolizing act of Christian identity

1.3.4.1 How liturgy works

Given that grace is to be found in the sacramental rites that give the believer a new status within the Church, in Chapter Nine Chauvet explores the nature of ritual, and particularly of liturgy. Given the context of the liturgical reforms after Vatican II, he tries to explain the dual temptations to a rigidity about liturgy that fears the loss of its heterotopy which creates a place where God can be found, (330-335) and an urge to master and imprint ourselves on the liturgy, so that there is no dispossession, and hence no place where God can come, no reception of the gift. (337-339) As *only* symbolic, ritual reveals the founder's absence, as *symbolic* it connects with the founder and reveals a total dependence on the founder, for the liturgy is not our own creation - to celebrate what Jesus gave us in this way is, before all words, to acknowledge him as Lord, in an apostolic Church. (341-342)

"'The first efficacy of rite' is to '*cause people to believe* in the rite itself.'"[48] Care must be taken to prevent the liturgy performing merely social functions; it must always be in service of the Gospel. The ritual marks Christian identity and difference on the body of each participant, but this must not be the cut which excludes according to the "metaphysical" scheme (competition, distance-separation, opposition), but a placing into communication, the linguistic "you-I" connection. (351-2)

The marking of Christian identity works with created things, which, because they are produced by God's word, are symbolic; they are neither the products of an artisan or emanations on a biological model, but gifts, and must be treated as gifts:

48 Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 349, citing FA Isambert, "Réforme liturgique et analyses sociologiques," *Le Maison Dieu* 128 (1976): 84.

not profaned or exploited, but recognised by a counter-gift. (358) Further, unlike the closed identity conferred by the initiation rites found in the classics of ethnography, Christian identity has a certain openness to it. (363) This initiation into the same culture comes about in a different way in each of us due to the unique history of our desire. (365) The desire for the rite, which is often the manifestation of an unconscious desire (which Chauvet sees as connected with a sense of guilt), must be redirected to avoid the liturgy performing a merely sociological function. (367) Yet Chauvet also sees that this desire, which "lives only to be the 'desire of the desire of the Other,'" is of its very essence unable to be satisfied, part of a journey to death that starts with our origin (presumably as subjects) in language. Metaphysics, says Chauvet, is an attempt to manage this contradiction by a route other than traditional religions, that is, through the way of reasons. (368)

Liturgy stages the body *as such*; makes it manifest as a desiring body in connection with the cosmos, society and the ancestors. (369) But it also stages the body with respect to the "Sacred:" not that the "sacred" (substantive) exists before the rituals, but that the rituals make certain things "sacred" (adjective), because the symbols can point to a greater depth. (369-370) The body, marked by its contradictory other, is presented to the sacred, the Other, in an allocutory mode, making petition for the object of its desire, and thus being taught that its true desire is for the Other itself. (370-371)

In the very concreteness of the sacraments, the scandal of their irreducible materiality, Chauvet sees that God is frustrating our attempts to project onto him all the onto-theological perfections, by withdrawing into human bodiliness: sacramental rites are the most eminent representation of this pro-cession of the divine God within

God's recession at the heart of what is most human. (373)

1.3.4.2 Sacraments as instituted

As well as being irreducibly material, sacraments are also irreducibly instituted and contingent. Chapter 10 explores this from the point of view of the symbol. For just as language must precede its use, so also must a symbol and hence a sacrament. The Church indeed has power over the sacraments, but there is a limit to this: "save their substance." (377-380) But this power would be pointless unless the sacraments had already been instituted, and in particular (and here Chauvet is in sincere agreement with Thomas, Bonaventure and their colleagues) unless they had been instituted by Christ as God they would not be able to confer grace. (379-380) The very acts by which the Church expresses her dependence on God are given by God, and are thus grace, but they also dispossess the Church of any power she might imagine she has over God, they are a "harsh" law, creating a barrier separating us from the origin which must always be for us an "empty place." (382) Chauvet then explores this instituted quality as it applies to the Eucharist, considering bread not from the point of view of substance but of symbol (which is appropriate, as Thomas considers sacraments to be *in genere signi*). (390)

First Chauvet considers transubstantiation, which is merely one way of talking of the change, and notes that it makes the accidents of the bread a sign, not a veil, and that it avoids any physicalism or gross representation, and that in framing the theory the scholastics were acknowledging the authority of traditional practices that led them to break with certain aspects of the Aristotelian categories they were using, a *sacrificium intellectus*. (384-387)

Nonetheless, Chauvet sees the scholastic expressions as "dangerous" in that they separate the Eucharistic presence from its destination, the Church, and the head from the body: they lead us to forget that the *esse* is an *ad-esse*. (388-389) He shows how this *ad-esse* is intrinsic to the structure of the Eucharistic celebration, the words of the prayers and even the formula of institution, the gestures, and, as he explains at length, even the material elements of bread and wine. (390-392) When we consider reality as intrinsically symbolic (even if the symbolism is culturally determined) then bread and wine will always be seen as related to, as gathering together, what Heidegger terms the Fourfold (*Geviert*): earth, sky, gods and mortals. (392-396) This is the real being of bread and wine: they never exist without this symbolic dimension, and the more they do this (e.g. by being used ritually), the more truly they are bread and wine, where "are" is used symbolically, not metaphysically. (397-398, cf 400). Nonetheless, the Church's recognition in the Eucharistic bread of God's self-gift to us in Christ is not a merely anthropological reality: it requires faith, a *sacrificium intellectus*. However, the "rupture" this entails "is in harmony with the entire symbolic approach" which has gaps through which the truth can shine, whereas the metaphysical approach aims to close the gaps. Moreover, our response to the Eucharist is to continue on the path of seeking the connections between the Fourfold (*Geviert*) that the bread already symbolizes. (398-399) Hence we no longer say that what once was bread is no longer bread, but rather that it is now *essential* bread, the true bread of John 6. (400)

In responding to the objection that this approach risks a "subjectivist reduction" of the reality the Church affirms in the Eucharist, Chauvet returns to the thrust of this whole chapter. For in the symbolic approach the real is that which

"resists every attempt at understanding by the subject," and is thus recognised as the "presence-of-the-absence." As Derrida notes, we do not become subject except by being subject to the rules of the symbolic order, which therefore resist us. This resistance is true of all the sacraments, and also of the reading of Scripture, except that we more easily erase "the mediation of the letter in favor of the 'Word'." (400-401) This, of course, leaves the Eucharist as prey to temptations to idolatry, but nonetheless in its exteriority, anteriority and permanence it proclaims the irreducibility of God. It is icon, not idol. (402-403) For in the symbolic approach, "presence" and "absence" "form one ambivalent reality." In the Eucharist (as elsewhere) Christ is present not as a "thing," but as "the gift of his life" and as "coming-into-presence." Without acknowledging this, one compromises the role of the Spirit in transubstantiation and also its eschatological aspect. God is always present as "inscribed" but not "circumscribed:" the response to God's presence is a journey or exile, even after taking possession of the land, and Christ is present in the breaking of the bread, even in its very rupture. (405-408)

1.3.4.3 Sacraments as instituting

Having dealt with the sacraments as instituted, now in Chapter Eleven he considers how, precisely as instituted, they are the means of instituting the identity of the Church. Identity is not something added to essence. The essence of the Church is its communion with the Father through Christ in the Spirit, and the sacraments institute the Church because they effect this relationship, and they do so as gift and grace. (409)

Chauvet is seeking to avoid two ways that are opposed (and therefore in the

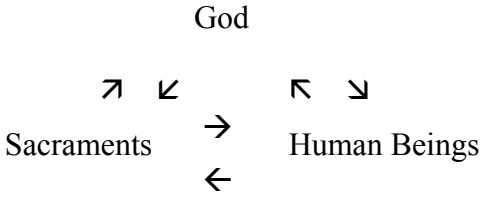
same genus), one in which sacraments produce grace in human beings

$$\text{God} \underset{\leftarrow}{\overset{\rightarrow}{}} \text{Sacraments} \underset{\leftarrow}{\overset{\rightarrow}{}} \text{Human Beings}$$

that leads to the objectivist impasse, and the other, in which sacraments express or translate the grace produced directly by God (or human activity considered from a semi-Pelagian point of view)

$$\text{God} \underset{\leftarrow}{\overset{\rightarrow}{}} \text{Human Beings} \qquad \underset{\leftarrow}{\overset{\rightarrow}{}} \text{Sacraments}$$

that leads to a subjectivist impasse. Vatican II, he notes, put forward (but did not explain) a different model:



which Chauvet now wants to explain.[49] The clockwise arrows represent the sacraments as revealers; the anti-clockwise arrows represent the sacraments as operators. But, because sacraments operate in the symbolic order, their operation is inseparable from revelation. On the other hand, this revelatory operation cannot be reduced to a mere translation into external signs of the interior working of grace, "since the revelation they make of it is inseparable from a symbolic labor, new each time, within the believing subject." (431) Thus, in the sacrament of penance, grace comes at the moment of true repentance, which normally takes place before the sacrament; but the act of repentance is an integral part of the sacrament, which then reveals the Christian nature of the grace that has been received. And part of what it reveals is that "the act of conversion cannot 'take' except in the Church and is

49 The diagram is from the French original (425); the English translation (415) has swapped some of the arrows.

always-already structured by the ecclesial and sacramental dimension," something Chauvet has prepared us for by previously describing in detail the ecclesial context of and involvement in the sacrament of penance. (Although, of course, a host of factors could intervene so that true repentance was not followed by a request for the sacraments.) This would seem illogical from a rationalist perspective, "where faith life and sacramental rites are set in competition," with the efficacious performance of one rendering the other superfluous. (436) If we are to take sacraments as they present themselves to us, if we are to take their "language game" seriously and not compromise it by trying to translate it into something it is not, then it is clear that sacraments are illocutionary, that they actually bring about some effect. This effect "is not of the physical, moral, or metaphysical but of the symbolic order." But, because we are approaching this from the symbolic point of view, this symbolic effect (say, of communion with Christ in his death and resurrection) is "most 'real.'" (437-438)

On this basis, Chauvet can explain sacramental grace. We can start by considering a sacrament, say, baptism, at the anthropological level. The illocutionary act of the presider, who embodies the social capital of the group and acts in its name, brings about a change of status in those baptized, which is recognised as real by the members of the group, and which creates a new set of relations (sons and daughters of God and so brothers and sisters of each other) and a new set of rights and duties. (438-439) What is happening theologically cannot be reduced to this, but "must still be understood within this perspective." Baptism takes place before the "absent-present Other" who is Christ, and when we are put into a new relation with him, we are put into a new relation to the others in the Church, and with God, no longer being

slaves but sons and daughters, thanks to the Spirit of the Son. (439-440) This new status is eschatological, and it has to unfold itself in ethical practice which involves the labour of receiving our new selves. Baptismal grace is thus the "permanent symbolic work of conversion by which, through the Spirit, we become believing subjects." (440) "A sacrament is an 'event of grace' not because it is a field in which a treasure is buried, but because it ploughs the field that *we ourselves are* and thus renders it fruitful." (442) "Grace concerns this painful *working through* the field of our desire." (440) And yet grace also changes our desire, which "is turned around into filial gratitude toward the Father," no longer thinking of him as a rival, because no longer considering his gifts as things, as with the Samaritan woman, for whom Jesus substitutes "'symbolic' water one can talk about but not manipulate" for "empirical water." In the end, the woman's desire is for Jesus himself. (441) The intra-linguistic efficacy by which we are proclaimed a son or daughter of God (and brother or sister) requires faith so that it can be "accompanied by an extra-linguistic efficacy concerning the gift and reception of grace itself." (443-444).

1.3.5 Connections with Christology and the theology of the Trinity.

Finally, in chapters twelve and thirteen, Chauvet shows the parallels between theology of the Trinity and Christology on the one hand, and theology of sacraments and grace on the other. He begins, as is usual, by indicating the deficiencies of the approach of the scholastics in general and Thomas in particular. In considering the incarnation in metaphysical categories, rather than finding therein the great refutation of ontotheology and of the dualism of nature and grace, they merely affirmed the perfections of the onto-theological God who is miraculously

present in Jesus Christ. The result was an over-emphasis on Christ at the expense of the Holy Spirit (456-464), which also resulted in a heavily institutional approach to the sacraments. (468-474) Moreover, (in parallel with what Chauvet says of the Eucharist) Christ was considered in his *esse* rather than his *ad-esse*, with two major consequences. (488-489) The humanity of Christ and by extension the sacraments were seen as instruments, and ultimately merely occasions whereby a God whose Trinitarian nature had been forgotten acted in a productionist way; and the historical context of Jesus and the mysteries of his life became irrelevant to the workings of the sacraments. (454-456)

Chauvet, like Thomas, talks of the sacramental grace as continuation of the incarnation, but he seeks to expound this from the perspective of symbolism. The great revelation of God in Christ takes place in the crucifixion, where God is "crossed out", so that it can only be understood within a meontology. But this revelation cannot remain at the level of an intellectual exercise, a mere "stroke of the pen." (533) To consider the crucifixion symbolically is to consider it as imprinted on us, embodied in us in the redirection of our desires manifested in the liturgy of ethical practice: the passage from discourse to the body that always needs to be done. (535) So the sacraments belong to the in-between time, remembering the death of Jesus as the great ethical example while not reducing it to mere example, and looking forward to a future that is not inevitable (a mere teleology) but truly eschatological, given to us because Christ died for us. (546-547)

On all accounts, it is an impressive theological vision.[50] But it is also a polemic against Thomas. He is accused, sometimes directly, sometimes by

50 In a review that does not spare criticism, Y. Labbé says of the work, "One has the impression of having read not a book, but a multitude." "Réceptions théologiques," 402.

implication only, of complicity with ontotheology, a productionist approach to causality and an almost inevitable reification of grace, belittling symbolism, not understanding the construction of the subject, ignoring the need to make a response in grace, and having an excessive focus on the metaphysical presence of Christ in the incarnation and in the Eucharist, without sufficient attention to the mysteries of his life, the *ad-esse* of Eucharistic presence and its symbolic character, and the role of the Holy Spirit. This is why we need to take a long, hard look at Thomas.

CHAPTER TWO

GRACE, TRUTH AND THE STRUCTURE OF THE *SUMMA THEOLOGIAE*

If we are to understand an article in the *Summa Theologiae* on Thomas' own terms, we need to understand the basic principles that structure the *Summa* at both the macro and micro level.[1] As most commentators on the *Summa* are aware - to their own frustration - these principles are merely hinted at in the *Summa* itself. However, in some of his other works we do find detailed analysis of categories that can be applied to the task at hand. In this chapter I shall first consider the way Thomas elaborates a threefold approach to truth in his commentary on John, and then show that this threefold approach is reflected not only in his understanding of Holy Scripture (and, by analogy, the sacraments) but also in the overall structure of the *Summa* itself. The earlier contender, *exitus-reditus*, however, still needs to be considered as providing the reason that any created thing finds its place in the *Summa*. Here Philipp Rosemann's insights into the circularity of being, drawn from sources such as the *Compendium Theologiae* and the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, will be useful, leading to a discussion of the pre-philosophical ideas that lie behind Thomas' understanding of "spirit" and the related term "grace." Thus the analysis of the structure of the *Summa* will be framed by the Johannine pairs "spirit and truth" and "grace and truth."

[1] In this thesis, "*Summa*" shall refer to Thomas' *Summa Theologiae* unless otherwise stated.

2.1 The threefold nature of truth

2.1.1 Establishing the threefold nature of truth

2.1.1.1 The three meanings of truth outside the *Lectura super Ioannem*

Although this examination of the threefold meaning of truth for Thomas relies mainly upon his *Lectura super Ioannem*, we can start with his basic definition, found there and in numerous other places: truth is *adaequatio* (or *commensuratio*) *rei ad intellectum*.[2] From this definition Thomas holds that truth properly speaking can exist only in a mind, but improperly speaking it can exist in things.[3] Truth is pre-eminently found in God, because God's knowledge of himself is the divine essence, and thus is in no way different from what is known, and the understanding of things in the divine mind is the cause of their conformity to that understanding; for the second sense of truth, however, the dependence runs the other way: truth in the human mind is determined by the mind's conformity to the thing.[4] "Truth" in things can be considered with respect to either the divine or the human intellect. With respect to the divine intellect, a thing is true insofar as it has the being intended for it by God, which is always the case, and so this sense of truth rarely becomes significant. With regard to human intellects, a thing is true insofar as it tends to produce a true estimation of itself in a human mind. Thus there are three important

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2 *Lectura super Ioannem* 14.2 (M1869, i.e. paragraph 1869 in the Marietti edition) and 18.6 (M2365); also *Scriptum* 1.19.5.1 cor, 1.19.5.2 ad 2; *De Veritate* 1.1 cor, 1.4 sed contra 7, 1.8 cor; *Super De Trinitate* 3.5.3 obj 1; *Super Romanos* 3.1 (M255); there are other variations, such as *adaequatio intellectus ad rem* (*Scriptum* 3.33.1.3.3 cor) and *adaequatio rei et intellectus* (*Summa Theologiae* I.16.2 obj 2) At this last use of the definition, and at *De Veritate* 1.1 cor, Thomas gives the *De Definitionibus* of Isaac (Israeli) as its source. In fact, the definition comes from Avicenna, and was used without attribution by William of Auxerre, Philip the Chancellor, Alexander of Hales and others. Philip also used another definition from Isaac, but attributed it to Augustine, a mistake Albert noted. It seems that Thomas, aware of this, attributed the wrong definition to Isaac. See Alexander Altmann and Samuel Miklos Stern, *Isaac Israeli: A Neoplatonic Philosopher of the Early Tenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 58-59

3 *Summa Theologiae* I.16.1 cor. (Henceforth referred to as ST)

4 ST I.16.5 cor, 16.6 cor.

ways one can speak of truth: in the divine mind, in the human mind, and in things. This characterization of truth is also found in the *Lectura super Ioannem*, presented slightly differently, at the same places as the definition. Long before that, however, as early as chapter 1, Thomas has given two other three-fold ways of considering truth.

2.1.1.2 Grace and truth

First, commenting on the "true light", Thomas holds that scripture sees truth as the opposite of three different things: falsehood, figures, and participation. Christ was the true light because, before his coming, there were three lights in the world which failed to be true: the philosophy of the pagans, which was false; the teaching of the law, which was in figures; and the knowledge possessed "in a more special manner through grace" by angels and holy people, which was participatory.[5]

Secondly, when dealing with the text "full of grace and truth", Thomas looks at the three ways Christ had the fulness of grace, and links them with three ways in which Christ had the fulness of truth.[6] As Bonino points out, the first two connections are easy to see.[7] The first is that through the grace of union Christ is truth itself. In second place, through his habitual grace, Christ's soul is perfected, and so he knows all truth.

The third way poses difficulties. The first difficulty is that it is divided into two. On the one hand there is the capital grace of Christ, both producing virtue in people's minds by infusion of grace and meriting superabundant grace enough for

[5] *Super Ioannem* 1.5 (M125), Cf Serge-Thomas Bonino, "La théologie de la vérité dans la *Lectura super Ioannem* de saint Thomas d'Aquin," *Revue Thomiste* 104 (2004):143.

[6] "Possunt autem haec verba exponi de Christo tripliciter." 1.8 (M188)

[7] Bonino comments on this text, but holds that there is no link between the capital grace of Christ and the fulfilment of the figures and promises of the Old Testament. "La théologie de la vérité ," 153-155.

infinite worlds (if they existed), which is coupled with a truth that fulfils the figures and promises of the Law. On the other hand there is a graciousness that accompanied his teaching and life, coupled with a truthfulness about his teaching, which was open, without using riddles or figures, or deceptively pandering to people's vices by not teaching the whole truth. But, *pace* Bonino, I would argue that in this seemingly disparate assembly of sorts of grace and truth there is a unity which logically complements the first two pairs.

We can start with the connections to the three things truth can be opposed to. By the grace of union Christ, while being human, is truly God, and not divine "by participation," which is the term Thomas uses in explaining texts like "you are gods." Habitual grace ensures that the contents of Christ's human mind are true and not erroneous. And Christ teaches the truth as opposed to proposing figures. But not only do we have to deal with the objection that Christ was notorious for speaking in parables, but we also need to make the connection between plain language and the capital grace of Christ.

As far as parables go, we should recall that for Thomas the literal sense of a figure of speech is what the speaker intends: the literal meaning of "My God is a rock" is "I can rely utterly on God." A mystical sense (allegorical, tropological or anagogical) is a sense in excess of the literal sense: the story of the manna literally recalls how the people of Israel were fed in the wilderness, but allegorically or figuratively it refers to the Eucharist. In this sense Christ's teaching, even his parables, was to be taken literally.

As far as the connection between plain language and capital grace is concerned, we need to remember that here we are concerned with "truth" as it is

found in things, in other words, how Christ helps people to have a true estimation of things. The question is not whether the ideas and virtues in the human mind of Christ are true as opposed to erroneous, but whether these ideas and virtues can be communicated to others, communication being something done through the body.[8] And because Thomas is showing that Christ is *full* of grace and truth, it is a question of the extent of that communication.

Thomas notes in *Tertia Pars* that Christ is the head of the Church in virtue of his humanity, and even his corporality, so in looking at Christ's capital grace it is not out of place to consider him as a "thing."[9] Here Thomas is talking about the scope of that headship: extensively it reaches not just to the Jews, not even to all people in the world, but even to infinite worlds if they existed, and intensively it leads them to perfection, which the Law could not do. To this is paired the weakness of the Law as a means of communicating truth: the Law spoke in figures, which the bulk of the people did not understand, and made promises that those without the gift of prophecy could not see as fulfilled (and so true)[10] - in Christ as a thing the fulness arrives, the promises are seen to be fulfilled and the meaning of the figures becomes clear. Further, Christ is not a passive thing, but an active one, and so - considering extension - his life and teaching (or perhaps we could say his teaching by word and example) are full of grace, and so attract *all* people (which Thomas supports with Ps 44:3 and Luke 21:38) and also - considering intension - they deliver *all* the truth, not impeded by figures or by a restriction of content.

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8 "It is an attribute of [human nature] that it is led through bodily and sensible things into spiritual and intelligible things." ST III.61.1 cor. All translations are mine unless otherwise stated.

9 ST III.8.2.

10 ST II-II.2.7 cor.

2.1.1.3 Truth and freedom; truth and the figures of the Law

In order to verify and deepen this, we can jump ahead to Thomas' comments on John 8:32 “the truth will set you free.”[11] Here we are given three sorts of freedom through three sorts of truth: freedom from error by the truth of doctrine; freedom from servitude by the truth of grace; and freedom from corruption by the truth of eternity. The error-doctrine pairing obviously goes with truth in the human mind; corruption-eternity can be linked to the truth which is God. This leaves the truth of things to be linked to the pair slavery and grace. This linking is corroborated in that, when talking about slavery and grace, Thomas quotes Roman 8:2, “But the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus will set me free from the law of sin and death.” When talking earlier of the capital grace of Christ, Thomas compared it to the weakness of the law, and quotes Roman 8:3, “What was impossible for the Law...”

What link is there between figure and slavery? Thomas holds that the law needed to meet people with the desires they had; and so, for instance, as they were addicted to sacrifices and could have relapsed into idolatry, it gave them sacrifices, which were figures of the sacrifice to come. As the bulk of the people (for whom the Law was principally intended) did not understand these figures, they acted simply out of obedience, and out of fear of the temporal punishments threatened to those who sacrificed to idols. They were slaves.[12]

As slaves, only their outward behaviour was changed by the Law: the Law did not make them good. And indeed Thomas argues that the Law was meant to evacuate itself, to show its own weakness. Thomas repeats the argument in almost

[11] *Super Ioannem* 8.4 (M1198-1199)
[12] ST I-II.96.2 cor, ad 2; I-II.97.3 ad 2; I-II.102.3 cor, I-II.107.1 ad 2.

identical terms when discussing both the timing of the giving of the Old and New Law, and the time of the incarnation.[13] In both cases Thomas argues that, because sin happens through pride, after sin humanity is left on its own, first of all to experience the weakness of natural reason, and then, after the revealed law comes to the aid of reason, to realise that humanity cannot fulfil the law by itself, and so needs grace. The Law is experienced as promise, as promise that in itself it cannot deliver.

The Law becomes true when it stops using figures and directs us to the truth. To fill in the gaps in Thomas' argument, then it no longer panders to people's vices, because it is not asking them to obey the law for material ends, but only out of love of God, who is the sole reward promised. The Law no longer promises a justification it cannot deliver (for no animal sacrifice could adequately win God's favour or grace), but the merit of Christ's passion actually does justify us; the promise is not related in figures, but is fulfilled.

Admittedly, Thomas' division between the Old and the New Law is more subtle than what has just been said, for he holds that grace was available under the Old Law. This shall be discussed later.

Returning to the three ways of considering truth, it may be objected that these categories are shifting around. For instance, when linking grace and truth, Thomas opposes Christ's teaching to the figures of the Law; when talking of liberation, the truth of doctrine is opposed to error. However, if we keep in mind that the categories fundamentally divide up truth according to where it resides, then we can see that the categories remain clear and distinct: it is the activity of teaching which straddles them. For teaching starts with truth in one mind, and ends with truth

[13] Thus ST I-II.98.6 is "Whether the Old Law was fittingly given in the time of Moses" and ST I-II.106.3 is "Whether the New Law should have been given from the beginning of the world"; and ST III.1.5 is "Whether it was fitting for God to be incarnated from the beginning of the world."

in another mind, and in this way *doctrina*, as the body of things to be taught, falls into the truth-in-the-mind category and is opposed to error. But the activity of teaching involves communication and thus things that make ideas present in the mind, either directly or as figures. Thus here the truth-in-things category is appropriate.

Further, the truth of God is practical as well as theoretical,[14] and so truth in the mind is found in both practical and speculative reason, and truth in things produces not only the right ideas in the minds, but also the virtues.

2.1.2 The threefold characterization of truth and the threefold spiritual sense of scripture

If this three-fold characterization of truth is of major significance to Thomas' thought, we would expect to find it in his other works, particularly in the *Summa Theologiae*. And indeed it is found there, and at key places: it lies behind the three mystical senses of scripture, the threefold way that sacraments signify, and the tripartite structure of the *Summa* itself.

2.1.2.1 Thomas' explanation of the three spiritual senses

In the very first question of *Prima Pars*, when outlining the nature of sacred doctrine, Thomas introduces and explains the four senses of scripture, known to the scholastics from Gregory the Great.[15] There is the literal sense and the three spiritual or mystical senses: the allegorical, the tropological and the anagogical. Thomas distinguishes them clearly. The literal sense is what the author intended,

[14] ST I.1.4 cor.
[15] ST I.1.10.

using words to designate things, and it is found in scripture in the same way as in secular literature. If the author was using a figure of speech, such as metaphor or allegory, then the intention behind the metaphor or allegory is the literal sense. Thus when scripture talks about the arm of God, the literal sense is what the author intends the word "arm" to symbolize, namely, God's operative power, and in this way, even though God does not have a physical arm, the text taken "literally," because it is not referring to a physical limb, is not false.[16]

But, Thomas reminds us, God has power not only over words, but also over things. (We could at this point recall that rather neglected sense of truth according to which all things are true because they reflect the divine mind which wills them to be as they are.) Thus the things Scripture refers to, as coming from God, have a sense intended by God, the spiritual or mystical sense: as Gregory says of the letter of scripture, *dum narrat gestum, prodit mysterium*.[17] This extra sense is threefold: the figures contained in the Old Law are figures of the New (allegorical); the New Law itself is a figure of future glory (anagogical), and what is said of Christ the head signifies what we the members should do (tropological or moral).[18] And just as the allegorical sense as a spiritual sense is different from an allegory deliberately intended by an author, so also when the Bible directly gives a command or talks of heaven, this is still the literal sense rather than a spiritual one.[19] These three spiritual senses correspond to the three ways in which the truth sets us free: from the figures of the Old Law and their corresponding slavery; from error by the truth of teaching; and from corruption by the truth of eternity.

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16 ST I.1.10 ad 3.

17 "While it tells the deed, it proclaims the mystery." Gregory, *Moralia*, 20.1, cited at ST I.1.10 *sed contra*.

18 ST I.1.10 cor.

19 *Quodlibet* 7.6.2 ad 2, ad 5.

2.1.2.1 The necessity of the spiritual senses

It is claimed that Thomas was the only 13th century theologian to pose directly the question of the relation of the spiritual senses to the literal sense, and the strength of his response lies in the way it ties the senses to the mystery of Christ, in terms of salvation history and the mystery of the Church as Christ's body.[20] But this "rational critique" of the spiritual sense, in a certain way "revolutionary," has been credited, not only with clarifying the four senses of scripture, but also with making the spiritual senses seem redundant.[21] For Thomas insisted that only the literal sense could be used in argument; and yet, this did not rob Sacred Scripture of anything, for nothing necessary to the faith is contained under a spiritual sense that is not found elsewhere in scripture stated literally. Given that there was a growing unease with mystical interpretations in the High Middle Ages, there seemed little point, claims Ceslaus Spicq, for an exegete to trouble himself with the spiritual senses of a text when all the riches could be found in other passages under the literal sense, and could be read and commented on in all security.[22]

Thomas, of course, did not mean to make the spiritual senses redundant, and he uses them abundantly in his scriptural commentaries, but given his position that they had no value in theological argument, he does not make use of them in his strictly theological works (apart from allegory), and so it is hard from reading Thomas to see their value. However, a number of threads of his theology can be woven together to develop a case for them, and I shall illustrate how this might be done by considering the tropological sense.

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[20] M.-D. Mailhiot OP, "La pensée de saint Thomas sur le sens spirituel," *Revue Thomiste* 1959 (59): 615n 2, 640-641.
[21] Ceslaus Spicq, *Esquisse d'une histoire de l'exégèse latine au moyen âge* (Paris: Vrin, 1944), 288.
[22] ST I.1.10 ad 2.

First, we can recall that a direct command, even in the New Testament, is an example of a literal rather than a spiritual reading. But as Thomas also holds, if a command simply remains a command outside of us, telling us what to do without enabling us to do it, then, even if it is a text of the New Law, it is the letter that kills, rather than the Spirit that gives life.[23] The New Law must cause something in us, rather than simply informing us of what is to be done. It is in this light that we should interpret Marie-Dominique Mailhiot's remark that the tropological interpretation is related to the causality of the *acta et passa Christi*, a causality that Mailhiot regards as exemplary, but which Thomas normally refers to as instrumental.[24]

Secondly, we can consider the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and in particular the gift of understanding. This gift goes beyond what is on the surface and gives us a deeper penetration of what we believe through faith.[25] Through faith we believe that which is proposed to us to be believed, whether it be the central mysteries of faith which exceed our power of reason, or the other things that are somehow ordered to them, "such as all things that are contained in divine Scripture."[26] This deeper sense of the scriptures, enabled by the power of the Holy Spirit, is not merely speculative, looking at eternal and necessary truths as they are in themselves. But rather, it sees these truths also "as they are somehow rules of human acts, for a cognitive power is all the more noble insofar as it extends to more things."[27] A fuller discussion of this

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23 ST I-II.106.2 cor.

24 Mailhiot OP, "La pensée ," 647; ST III.48.6 cor.

25 ST II-II.8.1 cor.

26 ST II-II.8.2 cor.

27 ST II-II.8.2 cor. Gilles Emery recalls Thomas teaching that the "statements and commands found in Sacred Scripture can be interpreted and understood from what the saints have done" through the inspiration of the same Spirit who inspired the text (*Super Ioannem* 18.4 (M2321), but he does not explicitly connect this to the spiritual senses. "Trinity as Truth: the Son as Truth and the Spirit of Truth in St. Thomas Aquinas" tr. Sr Mary Thomas Noble OP, in *Trinity, Church and the Human Person: Thomistic Essays* (Naples, Florida: Ave Maria University Press, 2007), 111.

process would show how the other gifts are involved.

So, what the gift of understanding accomplishes is the movement from the "is" to the "ought," a movement that much Enlightenment philosophy has argued cannot take place through human reason.[28] And it comes because the Word that faith accepts and that understanding penetrates is the *Verbum spirans Amorem*.[29] This is the move from unformed faith (faith that does not operate in love, the faith without works that is dead) to faith informed by love, the faith that saves. But in this process the imperative does not come from without, from the letter, but from within, from the Spirit, and so we have the movement from the external Old Law to the New Law, which is only secondarily in writing, but primarily is written on the human heart.[30]

Thus the spiritual sense is, at least in this case, something interior to each one who believes in love. The believer already knows what to do, for he or she believes the commands that are given literally in other parts of the New Testament, but the spiritual sense enables the believer to carry out the command in love. Hence Thomas can assert that the gifts of the Holy Spirit (and thus presumably the spiritual senses) are necessary *for salvation*, but that what is necessary *for faith* is always expressed literally somewhere in Scripture, and the need for the spiritual sense to have some basis in a literal sense is a necessary corrective for interpreting spirits, which are impulses that go beyond human reason.[31] But, to return to our original

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[28] Alasdair MacIntyre traces this back to Hume, and argues that it arises once a sense of purpose or goal in nature is lost. *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (London: Duckworth, 1981), 56-59. We shall see soon how the "spirit" that inspires the spiritual senses is dynamic and purposeful.

[29] ST I.43.5 ad 2. Gilles Emery also uses the idea of the *Verbum spirans Amorem* to explain how the Spirit teaches the truth without being a different principle from the Son or adding anything to what he teaches. He does not, however, explicitly connect this to the seven gifts of the Spirit. "Trinity as Truth: the Son as Truth and the Spirit of Truth in St. Thomas Aquinas" tr. Sr Mary Thomas Noble OP, in *Trinity, Church and the Human Person: Thomistic Essays*, (Naples, Florida: Ave Maria University Press, 2007), 103-110.

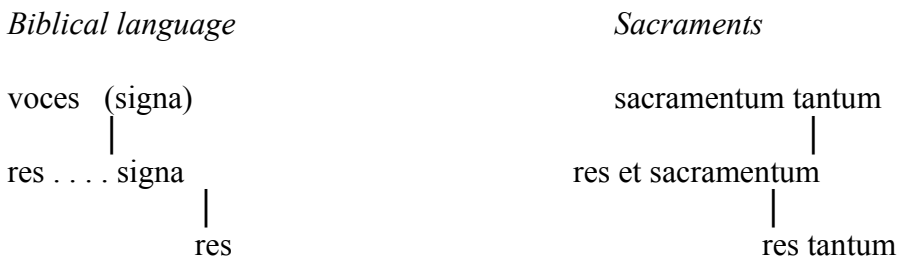
[30] ST I-II.106.1, 107.1 ad 2. This richer view of how Scripture works challenges Chauvet's claim that Thomas has a merely instrumental approach to language. *Symbol and Sacrament*, 33-34.

[31] ST I-II.68.2 and ST I.10.1 ad 1; *Quodlibet* 7.6.1 ad 3, cf. ST I-II.68.1 cor.

claim, it can be seen (at least in one case) that the truth imparted by the three-fold spiritual sense is not simply a truth that informs, but a truth that sets us free.[32]

2.1.3 The threefold signification of the sacraments

In his discussion of the spiritual sense according to Thomas, Mailhiot compares the structure of scriptural language to the structure of the sacraments, using the following diagram.[33]



In both cases there is a sign that refers to and causes (is the *sacramentum [tantum]* of) a thing (*res*), and yet this thing (*res*) is also the sign and cause (is *res et sacramentum*) of a further reality, which is not a sign *(res tantum*). The analysis of the sacrament into these three parts had arisen in the 12th century as a way of making sense of Augustine's insistence that, even when the recipient posed an obstacle and thus did not receive grace, something lasting was conferred in the baptism and so the sacrament need not, and should not, be repeated when the person came to true faith and charity, an insistence extended, *mutatis mutandis*, to the other sacraments.[34]

There are grounds not mentioned by Mailhiot for taking this further.

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[32] Ulrich Horst notes that Thomas is moving in this direction in his discussion of the gift of understanding (ST II-II.8.2), but does not pursue it, preferring to answer the question of the compatibility of faith and understanding. See *Die Gaben des Heiligen Geistes nach Thomas von Aquin* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2001), 113-114. John Farrell OP notes how the gift of understanding gives one "an insight into the direct order of Providence," (the "eternal law of the Holy Spirit" which Thomas does not explain further, cf. ST I-II.69.1 obj 2) "impossible for human reasoning and insight alone." "St Thomas Aquinas' Treatment of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit in the *Summa Theologiae*" (PhD diss., University of Edinburgh, 1984), 243-244.

[33] Mailhiot, "La pensée," 631.

[34] Ibid.

Thomas recalls Augustine's statement that sacraments can be treated as "visible words." Moreover, he makes a parallel between God's choice of material elements in the sacraments and of the ways spiritual things are spoken of in Scripture through similitudes chosen by the judgment of the Holy Spirit. He could here be referring to both the literal and the mystical senses of scripture.[35]

Even better, just as the spiritual sense is threefold, so also is the signification of the sacrament. For at the beginning of the tract on sacraments, as soon as he has established that sacraments are signs, and signs "of a sacred reality insofar as it is sanctifying human beings," Thomas then uses Aristotelian causality to establish the different realities of which a sacrament can and should be a sign.[36] For in signifying our salvation

> there are three things to be considered, namely: the cause itself of our sanctification, which is the passion of Christ; and the form of our sanctification, which consists in grace and virtues; and the ultimate end (*finis*) of our sanctification, which is eternal life. And all these are signified through the sacraments. Whence a sacrament is: a rememorative sign of that which came before, namely of the passion of Christ; and a demonstrative sign of that which is brought about in us through the passion of Christ, namely grace; and a prognostic—that is, announcing beforehand —sign of future glory.[37]

The formal and final causality of our sanctification clearly correspond to truth in the human mind (as opposed to error and vice) and to the truth which is God, which we shall finally see and thereby receive eternal life and liberation from corruption. But there is no easy connection between the passion and truth in things (as opposed to the figure) which leads to freedom from slavery. A full answer to this will unfold as this thesis develops, for this threefold characterization of truth is being used as a heuristic device to help us understand the sacraments, and when, having

[35] ST III.60.6 obj 1, III.60.5 ad 1.
[36] ST III.60.2 cor.
[37] ST III.60.3 cor.

used it, we see how the passion is effective in the sacraments, we shall understand the connection. As a foreshadowing of the answer, however, we can note that Thomas holds that any action of Christ would have had sufficient merit to achieve our salvation, but that the action whose merit was actually deputed to that end was the passion, for as well as meriting it removed other obstacles as well.[38] Chief among these obstacles was our attachment to material things, for, having turned away from God in the sin of Adam, human beings were *collapsi ad corpora*, which is why God became incarnate, using these very same bodily things to save us.[39] What the passion does, we shall see, is to reveal that all bodily things used in worship or received as rewards from God are to be first understood as signs of spiritual realities, and so it releases us from slavery to the Old Law, which does not in itself go beyond the figure and the material reward or punishment.

Thomas does not here mention the material cause of the sanctification of a human being, which is, of course, the human being who, by the power of the passion is filled with grace and virtue so as to be able to merit eternal life. For the material cause is passive, and the sacrament does not need to signify the material cause but to act upon it.

One further comment on the parallel should be made. The realities scripture refers to are generally visible realities and thus easily act as signs themselves, but character, as a "mark" on the soul, is not immediately perceived by the senses, and thus cannot be a sign in the strict sense of the word. Character functions as a sign only because it is produced by the visible, audible, sensible sacramental ritual.[40] Therefore it is the character-as-produced-by-the-outward-rite

[38] *Quodlibet* 2.1.2.
[39] ST III.1.3 ad 1.
[40] ST III.63.1 ad 2.

which is the sign signifying and producing grace.[41] The linkage between the *sacramentum tantum* and *res et sacramentum* is given by God alone, just as in scripture God is responsible not only for the *voces* but also for the *res* that they denote; however, as the *res et sacramentum* is not visible in itself, faith is needed to perceive the truth of this link. This is that fourth and often overlooked sense of truth, the infallible matching between things as they are and things as God knows and wills them to be. And indeed, when we have probed the workings of sacraments and seen the role that the material element plays for us who are *collapsi ad corpora*, we shall get a clearer understanding of the link between the literal and spiritual senses of scripture, to see why the spiritual sense is necessary, not as a piece of information (for the information is contained literally elsewhere) but as a transformation of the literal sense, and also to see how this necessary spiritual sense can be considered as having a basis in the sacramentality of Christian life.

2.1.4 The structure of the *Summa Theologiae*

We do not merely see this threefold understanding of truth at work in Thomas' treatment of Scripture and sacraments. I want to suggest that it also sheds light on Thomas' most puzzled-over threefold division, the structure of the *Summa Theologiae*. This will be of direct benefit to this thesis, because, for instance, it will help us to understand why Thomas does not discuss sacraments when he deals with grace or the virtue of religion.

2.1.4.1 Why the *exitus-reditus* schema fails to convince

Contemporary discussion of the structure of the *Summa* began with an

[41] Cf Schillebeeckx, *L'économie*, 425.

article in 1939 by Marie-Dominique Chenu. His basic argument was that, in order to present sacred *history* as an Aristotelian *scientia*, Thomas made us of the neo-Platonic idea of *exitus* and *reditus*.[42] He bases his claim for this structure on the prologue to I.2, the prologue to II (where he claims that the vocabulary "exemplar" and "image" are a clear indication that he is employing a Neoplatonic thematic) and from the *Scriptum Super Sententiis*: "Unde in prima parte determinat de rebus divinis secundum *exitum* a principio; in secunda secundum *reditum* in finem."[43] Thus *Prima Pars* deals with God, and the procession of creatures from God (*exitus*) and *Secunda Pars* deals with the return of the rational creature to God (*reditus*); *Tertia Pars* deals with Christ who is the way.[44] As Chenu himself notes, this leaves *Tertia Pars* outside the structure, and ends up dealing with grace, charity and contemplation before Christ; however, he suggests that this helps show that God was not compelled to send his Son into the world.[45]

But Chenu's claim that *exitus-reditus* is actually the structuring principle of the *Summa* does not withstand criticism.[46] For instance, Michel Corbin notes that divine governance, which deals with the return of creatures to God, and which was traditionally considered part of moral (and where it is found in *Contra Gentiles*), is moved to *Prima Pars* in the *Summa Theologiae*.[47] True, the reason for anything

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[42] M.-D. Chenu OP, "Le plan de la Somme théologique de S. Thomas," *Revue Thomiste* 45.1 (Jan-Mar 1939): 97.

[43] ST III prologus and ST III.56.1 ad 2 and ad 3; *Scriptum* 1.2.1 prologus; cited at Chenu, "Le plan," 98.

[44] Cf ST I.2 prologus.

[45] Chenu, "Le plan," 101-105.

[46] Many writers have put forward arguments for or against: for a summary, see Brian V. Johnstone, "The Debate on the Structure of the *Summa Theologiae* of St. Thomas Aquinas: from Chenu (1939) to Metz (1998)," in *Aquinas as Authority: A collection of studies presented at the second conference of the Thomas Instituut te Utrecht, December 14 – 16, 2000*, ed. Paul van Geest, Harm Goris and Carlo Leget (Leuven: Peeters, 2002), 187-200. Various individual theologians will be mentioned later at an appropriate point in the development of the argument of this thesis.

[47] Michel Corbin, *Le chemin de la théologie chez Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1974), 798-799.

creaturely thing being discussed in the *Summa* is that it has its source and goal in God (cf ST I.1.7 cor), but to take this as structuring principle for the entire work is to mistake material objects for formal objects.[48] It is significant that to find the pair *exitus* and *reditus* Chenu has to go to the *Scriptum*, Thomas' earliest work and one where the order was dictated by the text on which he was commenting.

Exitus and *reditus* still have a part to play in the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, but they have become part of a larger whole which operates on two principles. The first division is between what we can know by reason (Books 1-3), and what is beyond reason but is believed on authority and which can be shown not to contradict reason (Book 4). Then there is a second division: the divine nature; created natures as proceeding from God; the return of created natures to God.[49]

The faith/reason distinction is to be expected from the very aim of *Contra Gentiles*, and it gives rise to a parallel structure. Book 1 and the first part of Book 4 are about natural theology and the confession of the Trinity respectively; Book 2 and the second part of Book 4 are about physics (in the Aristotelian sense) and the incarnation (and those things consequent upon it); Book 3 and the last part are about morality (which includes divine governance) and our ultimate end (resurrection). Although the *exitus-reditus* scheme is subordinated to reason-revelation; it is followed here more rigorously than in the *Sentences* (where, for instance, grace and sin is considered in the second book, which should still be about *exitus*). However, Thomas is making a clear link between this scheme and those branches of philosophy that somehow concern God: metaphysics, physics and ethics (not mathematics), which makes sense given the aim of the book. We may note,

[48] Wilhelm Metz, *Die Architektonik der Summa Theologiae des Thomas von Aquin: Zur Gesamtsicht des thomasischen Gedankens* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1998), 201.
[49] Corbin, *Le chemin*, 792-793.

however, that whereas pagan metaphysics considered all separated substances, Thomas distinguishes between the Creator and creatures, and angels are discussed under "physics" in Book 2.

Further insight into the three-fold division of knowledge is gained from the commentary on John, a work more or less contemporary with the *Summa*, where Thomas uses it twice. He alters a remark of Theophylact concerning Pilate's notice on the cross to link the Jews with (revealed) theology, the Greeks with "natural and philosophical philosophy", and the Latins with moral science.[50] More significantly, in his proœmium he links these three sciences with three aspects of the contemplation of God. Unremarkably, he says that natural science has the fulness (or breadth) of contemplation because it considers things that proceed from God; and among the natural sciences metaphysics has the height of contemplation. Moral science, he says, has the perfection of contemplation, because it is about the ultimate end, which would relate to the definition of morality used in *Contra Gentiles*.[51]

However, a few lines earlier Thomas has called John's contemplation perfect because the one contemplating is drawn up to the level of what is contemplated. Perfect contemplation is unitive and sanctifying. Thomas notes twice that this sanctification is achieved through the "sacraments of the humanity," which he claims are referred to when the Isaian text under discussion says, "and the things that were under him filled the temple."[52] The sacraments (of the New Law) therefore hold an ambivalent position: they could come under morality, but because they "fill the temple," they are the presence of his power, and could fall under natural knowledge, just as in *Contra Gentiles* sacraments are considered as consequences of

[50] *Super Ioannem* 19.4 (M2422); cf *Catena in Ioannem* 19.6 for the original quote.
[51] *Super Ioannem* proœmium, M9.
[52] *Super Ioannem* proœmium, M8.

the incarnation, and are paralleled with natural philosophy.[53]

When considering divisions of human knowledge, therefore, Thomas does not abandon the metaphysics (natural theology) – physics – morality (final end) approach, wherein sacraments, as means to the end, would fall under morality. But Thomas mentions this division in the proœmium only to point out that John is the true contemplative and his Gospel has "totum simul" what these sciences contain "divisim." Divine knowledge is one; there is no division in the divine intellect between speculative and practical: and revealed knowledge shares in this unity. Therefore this division is not necessarily the best for dealing with what is known through faith, and it seems that in the *Summa* Thomas has chosen a different one, based upon the extent to which the Word of God has been revealed to us and in us.

Three differences between *Contra Gentiles* and the *Summa Theologiae* are evidence of this change. That the Trinity is in the first section shows that the whole work is about *sacra doctrina*, what has been revealed. The placement of divine governance in *Prima Pars* shows that *exitus-reditus* is no longer the principle. This gives rise to the third difference, that morality must be considered as something different than merely the return to God, and so in the *Summa* it is about the human being as the image of God.[54]

2.1.4.2 An earlier approach: *naturalis, moralis, sacramentalis*

My own interpretation of the structure of the *Summa* appeals to an earlier classification, and indeed the earliest we have. Near the start of the 14th century Fra Tolomeo of Lucca, who had been a pupil and travelling companion of Thomas, used

[53] However, they are also alluded to under morality in Book 3, where the role of material things in worship and sanctification is mentioned.

[54] Corbin, *Le plan* ,796-799.

the adjectives *naturalis*, *moralis* and *sacramentalis* to label the three parts.[55] More explicitly, the *Summa* deals with: natures (divine first, then created); moral philosophy (general first, then specific vices and virtues); and sacraments and the incarnation of the Word. This neatly coincides with Thomas' threefold characterization of truth, for Thomas is speaking as a "doctor veritatis catholicae."[56] There is the truth in God (that is, in the divine mind), which is the same as the truth in things when we consider the relation between the nature of things and the ideas in the divine mind. Then there is truth in the human mind, which is an adequation of the human mind to the divine reality (theological virtues) and created reality (cardinal virtues). Finally, there is truth in things, insofar as they lead us to the truth. This is Christ considered not as Word in itself, but as something that presents itself to us, thus Christ in his humanity and the extensions of that in the sacraments. As it is theology, at all stages there is a procession from God and return: uncaused in the case of the divine nature and efficiently caused in the case of created natures; formally caused in the case of morals (I shall explain this later); and instrumentally caused in the case of Christ's humanity and the sacraments. And throughout God is operating as the end of the return and thus final cause for creatures.

Furthermore, at all stages the Word of God is always present, and indeed all things are understood through the Word. In considering both divine nature and angelic natures, we see that in all cases understanding takes place through the Word. This is not the incarnate Word, for reasons we shall soon see.

Secunda Pars describes itself as dealing with the image, as opposed to

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[55] Tholomaeus de Luca, *Historia ecclesiastica nova*, in *Thomae Aquinatis vitae fontes praecipuae*, ed. Angelico Ferrua OP (Alba: Ed. Domenicane, 1968), 22.39 (§175). Fra Tolomeo describes his relationship to Thomas, ibid., 23.8,10 (§176, 178).

[56] ST I proœmium

the exemplar treated in *Prima Pars*. In particular, the human being is a divine image insofar as *per se potestativus*, as *principium* of his or her own actions. We have already seen the rôle played here by law, as well as the gift of wisdom. And Image is a personal term for the Word; Law and Wisdom are not personal, but are normally appropriated to the Word.[57] As we have seen, the Law comes to its perfection in Christ. The human soul of Christ was full of all virtues - because it already enjoyed the beatific vision - and it is these virtues that are described in this part. In *Secunda Secundae* one *sed contra* in every six appeals to Christ's authority, and if there is less appeal to him in the other parts of the articles, it is because Thomas is trying to show that this teaching is rational. Furthermore, for faith to be salvific it must be faith in the Trinity and incarnation, and hope and love arise from this faith.[58] As Thomas stated at the beginning of the *Summa*, the content of the faith is what is known by God and by the blessed.[59] It is this knowledge that we share through informed faith that is in a sense the formal cause of our virtues.

Christ is not left to *Tertia Pars* as something of an afterthought; rather, once we have seen how his New Law of grace formally makes us good in *Secunda Pars*, we can see how through his humanity as it presents itself to us (in its corporality), Christ is the instrumental cause of our graced living.

2.1.4.3 An increasingly human presence of the Word

Rudi te Velde sees the plan of the *Summa* as: God-and-his-works; man-and-his-works; Christ-and-his-works, and notes an increasing level of

[57] ST I.35; I-II.93.4 ad 2; I.39.8 cor.
[58] ST II-II.2.5, 7 and 8.
[59] ST I.1.2 cor.

concretisation.[60] The notion of increasing concretisation is helpful. The plan of the *Summa* is professedly paedogogical: this work, unlike others, will have an order that makes it suitable for beginners.[61] Thomas holds that the teacher knows something more profoundly than the pupil (as does the higher angel with respect to the lower angel), because in his grasp of that reality he realises more of its consequences and effects.[62] This approach to teaching is appropriate for *sacra doctrina*, where both pupil and master know the subject matter through faith, and thus without complete comprehension. The teacher, therefore, must break down (*distinguere*) the unified concept to present it at a level the student can understand, at a level which is more connatural to the student. For the human being considering divine truth, this will be at a more human level, and even a more corporeal level, for after sin we are *collapsi ad corpora*.[63] So Thomas starts with God, the shared object of our faith that we wish to understand through *sacra doctrina*. We can make many statements about God, but although the students can assent to these statements, they have very little grasp of their content - as Karen Kilby comments about Thomas' Trinitarian doctrine.[64] Yet Thomas says that without this Trinitarian doctrine, we cannot understand creation (which takes place through the Word) or our salvation. But the correlative is also true. The procession of creatures from God is closer to us than the procession of the Word from the Father, and is more understandable *quoad nos*: having dealt with creation, and then the various ways that creatures share in the governance of creation - specifically how angels and then humans know and express that knowledge, and

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60 Rude A te Velde, *Aquinas on God: The 'Divine Science' of the Summa Theologiae* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 18.

61 ST I proœmium

62 ST I.106.1 cor.

63 Cf ST III.1.3 ad 1

64 Karen Kilby, "Aquinas, the Trinity and the Limits of Understanding," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 7.4 (2005): 414-427.

also how humans generate children - we have grasped more deeply the procession of the Word in which all these motions somehow participate.[65] It is not a movement upward from creation to the Creator - Thomas insists that such attempts to prove the Trinity merely provoke well-deserved mockery[66] - but something that deepens the grasp of what is already believed. The movement then to morality and sacramentality is not a movement to the more concrete as such, but a movement to what is more easily grasped by the (fallen) human being.[67]

Neither is Thomas arguing *more geometrico*: for instance, it is argued that the New Law justifies before justification is explained, and when that moment arrives, justification is attributed to faith before faith has been discussed.[68] Argument *more geometrico* would require a much deeper level of understanding of the first principles; we understand point and line, but we only know God's existence, not what God is.

2.1.4.4 Resolving some anomalies in the structure of the *Summa*

It is from this point of view that we can reconcile what would seem to be two anomalies within the natural-moral-sacramental plan.

First of all, Thomas would seem to deal with angelic morality (and even divine "morality", as we might term theodicy) outside the moral part. But *Secunda*

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65 Cf *SCG* 2.2.

66 ST I.32.1 cor.

67 And in this way the *vetula* (old woman) (cf *In Symbolum Apostolorum* 1), by living a virtuous life in grace and receiving the sacraments, knows the Trinitarian processions in the deepest way we can know in this human life; the theologian is able to articulate the connections. Cf Bruce D Marshall, "*Quod scit una vetula*: Aquinas on the Nature of Theology," in *The Theology of Thomas Aquinas*, ed. Rik van Nieuwenhove and Joseph Wawrykow (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), 1-35, and Kilby, "The Limits of Understanding," 426-427. Theology in showing the connections may help show the logical coherence of what is believed and to refute heresy and attacks from unbelievers (ST I.1.8), and in these and similar ways may assist the life of faith and love, but it cannot replace it and is always at its service.

68 I-II.106.2 comes before I-II.113.4, which comes before II-II.1-16.

Pars is a separate part not because it concerns choices made in freedom, but because it concerns the Word as Law and Wisdom present in a special way in the human being. The eternal decrees of God are beyond us, and the statements of theodicy are as comprehensible to us as the statements of Trinitarian theology. Similarly, the morality of angels, who know no deliberation, and who cannot grow in merit, for whom the concept of "way" simply does not apply, is totally different from ours. Even if we were to talk about it, it would not substantially advance our understanding. And so Thomas' treatment of what angels do is helpful to us insofar as we understand angelic nature, not insofar as we see the Eternal Law present in the angelic minds.

Similarly, although Thomas carefully relegates all questions regarding the sacraments of the New Law to *Tertia Pars*, he considers the sacraments of the Old Law in *Prima Secundae*. But Thomas insists that the sacraments of the Old Law were not instrumental causes of grace. As we shall see, any grace that came through the sacraments of the Old Law came through the faith and obedience of the one who received them.[69] They are for Thomas *sacramenta legalia* as a part of the Old Law under the general discussion of law. There is no extra presence of the Word in such a sacrament than in any other aspect of the Old Law. But the sacraments of the New Law are extension of the incarnation of the Word, as we shall see.

Finally, we might note that this explanation of the structure of the *Summa* also covers the parts that were not written. Just as he did in *Contra Gentiles*, in the *Summa* Thomas labels his eschatological section as being about the resurrection. Now the resurrection operates by a sort of instrumental causality, and also as an exemplary cause: as an exemplar not for God, but for us - in other words, the

[69] ST III.62.6.

incarnate Word in his rising effectively communicates the truth of the risen life to the just.[70]

2.2 *Exitus-reditus*, spirit and grace

Having established the macro-structure of the *Summa*, we can now consider *exitus-reditus* as the reason why anything is discussed there. We can start with God, both in the unity of the essence and the distinction of the persons, and then look at the divine missions, the vestiges or images of the Trinity in creation, the various ways that creation gives glory to God, and the participation of creatures in divine governance, including human reproduction. This will expose us to some more "archaic" aspects of Thomas' thought, especially the meanings he attaches to the word *spiritus*, so that we can show some links to anthropological notions of spirit and grace.

2.2.1 The circular movement in God and in creation

The *Summa* describes itself as handing on "the knowledge of God, and not only as he is in himself, but also as he is the *principium* of things and their *finis*."[71] All this is covered (at a certain level only) in *Prima Pars*, which treats of God, and then of creatures, and we shall follow that order of discussion, but then look at what Thomas places at the hinge, the divine missions.

2.2.1.1 Processions in God

[70] ST III prologus and ST III.56.1 ad 2 and ad 3.
[71] ST I.2 prologus

Instead of saying that he wants to talk about creatures as they come from God and return to God, at two key points Thomas sums up the contents of that second section as the "procession" of creatures.[72] This term obviously links back to his theology of the Trinity, for it is through establishing the reasonableness of processions in God that Thomas can move on to real relations and then the "distinction of persons," his term for the subject matter of this section.[73] But it is also implicit that this procession in creatures must have God as its beginning and end, and thus be somehow a circular movement. We have been prepared for this: before Thomas shows that knowledge is one of the operations that leads to procession in God, he shows that knowledge is a return to self which is in fact what it is to subsist. "For a thing to return to its own essence (*redire ad essentiam suam*) means nothing other than for it to subsist in itself," and thus the highest degree of self-subsistence is associated with the most perfect form of return.[74] As Thomas O'Meara points out, the fact that the tract on the unity of the divine essence concludes with a question about beatitude is not "a medieval curiosity, but it is in fact a summary of Aquinas' philosophical theology of God and a bridge to properly revealed and supernatural theology."[75]

We get a more developed and more explicitly "circular" presentation of this notion of subsistence as return in *De Potentia*, where Thomas is arguing that there are only three persons because there are only two processions, associated with the

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[72] ST I.2 prologus, I.44 prologus.

[73] ST I.2 prologus, I.44 prologus. The prologue to I.27 gives the subject matter as the "Trinity of persons *in divinis*", but then goes on to order the material on the basis of what enables the persons to be distinguished.

[74] ST I.14.2 ad 1. cf Philipp W. Rosemann, *Omne agens agit sibi simile: A 'Repetition' of Scholastic Metaphysics* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1996), 254.

[75] Thomas F O'Meara, "Grace as a Theological Structure in the *Summa theologiae* of Thomas Aquinas," *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 55 (1988): 136.

two operations of knowledge and love.[76] In the case of God, in both these operations the procession remains entirely within God: the operation is God (in God, to be is to know is to will), the object is God, and the word or love that proceeds is God. But there is also a circularity that arises from both operations taken together, as in human beings, but differently. In human beings, knowledge is caused by exterior things, and then the knowledge inspires desire that is directed back to those things, and so the "circle is closed", but outside the human being. God's knowledge, far from being caused by things, causes them, and God's love is not directed to things, but directs things to him. Indeed, God's knowledge and love of things is merely an aspect of God's knowledge and love of self. Thus with the procession of the Holy Spirit, the divine love directed to God, "circulus conclusus est," and there are no more divine persons.

We can develop this notion of circularity in two ways. The first is to consider it in terms of knowledge and love, and in *De Potentia* Thomas goes on immediately to develop this in terms of the vestiges of God and two levels of the image of God. The second is in terms of generation. Both of these are found in *Prima Pars*.

2.2.1.2 Vestiges and images of God

Thomas expects to find a vestige of the Trinity even in irrational creatures, because every effect resembles its cause. And so a thing in its subsistence resembles the Father, in its form it resembles the Word, and it its being somehow ordered to God it resembles God's love of self. In rational creatures there is found an image through the operations of knowledge and love, the image of creation. And when the

[76] *De Potentia* 9.9 cor.

object of that knowledge and love is God, the image is at a higher degree (of recreation), of which 2 Cor 3:18 says: "for we with unveiled face contemplating the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image."[77]

In *Prima Pars* the vestige is more clearly distinguished from the image.[78] The image itself can now enjoy three grades: creation, recreation (through grace) and likeness (through glory). This helps explain why Thomas pays so much attention to angelic and human knowledge and willing, the "image of creation." What is more important is that he concludes the tract on the Trinity by discussing the means by which the "image of recreation" is achieved, the missions of the divine persons. This is Thomas' first description of grace, from a Trinitarian and cosmological perspective, so it is important that we consider it closely.

2.2.1.3 Divine missions

Two things are necessary to consider a divine person as sent. That person must first of all proceed from another divine person, and secondly he must begin to exist in a new mode at the terminus of the sending;[79] if that new mode can be described as the other "having" the divine person, that is, being freely able to use (*uti*) or enjoy (*frui*) that person, then we can also talk of the person being given.[80]

2.2.1.3.1 Visible and invisible missions

Thomas distinguishes between visible and invisible missions. A visible

[77] *De Potentia* 9.9 cor.
[78] ST I.45.7, I.93.2, I.93.6 cor.
[79] ST I.43.1 cor.
[80] ST I.43.3 cor.

mission does not involve the use of a pre-existing creature, but is the presence of a divine person to a creature that was created specifically for the purpose of manifesting that divine person. The Son was visibly sent in Jesus; the Holy Spirit in the dove at the baptism, the cloud at the transfiguration, and the wind and the fire at Pentecost. The visible missions are a concession to our human weakness.[81]

Invisible missions, on the other hand, are part of God's original plan for rational creatures. Indeed, it is only to rational creatures, whose powers of intellect and will make them to be in the image of God, that there can be a deeper mode of presence by which God is present as the known in the knower and the beloved in the lover, a way by which the rational operation reaches right through to God.[82] The presence that raises the intellect is a mission of the Word; that which moves the will is a mission of the Spirit who is Love. Any other divine activity in a creature (rational or otherwise) is simply the common way in which God is in creation through essence, power and presence. Thomas is clear that although graces *gratis datae*, such as knowledge and faith, may enrich our intellect, they are not considered to be an invisible mission of the Son, for in them the Son is known through some effects in us, but he does not dwell in us or can be we be said to have him.[83] Invisible missions are occasions where sanctifying grace is bestowed upon a person, either initially or to augment grace already given; further, the term is normally applied to a significant movement of grace, such as preparation for martyrdom or for renunciation of worldly goods.[84]

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81 ST I.43.3 and I.43.7 cor.
82 ST I.43.3 cor and ST I.38.1 cor.
83 ST I.43.3 obj 3 and ad 3.
84 ST I.43.6 cor, ad 2 and ad 3.

2.2.13.2 The inseparability of the missions

More light is shed by the arguments that there cannot be an invisible mission of the Son without an invisible mission of the Holy Spirit. First of all, the two persons are inseparable, and always work together in works *ad extra*.[85] Further, the Son is not just any word, but the *Verbum spirans Amorem*. If the Son is really in us, if he is not merely known but *percipitur* (which implies some sort of experiential knowledge), then the inevitable result is to break forth into love.[86] Furthermore, the sending of a divine Person implies a perfecting of those who receive, raising them up to be assimilated to the person who is sent. But the raising of the intellect, which should be attributed to the mission of the Son, is experienced as gift, and therefore is also to be attributed to the Holy Spirit, who as Love is the one who makes the gift object a gift.[87] Not surprisingly, therefore, throughout the question on the divine missions there is an emphasis that these missions must bestow *gratia gratum faciens* and that grace is not bestowed without them.[88]

Thus this circular motion that is so deeply part of existence is part of what it is to be human, and is perfected by the circular motion within God which, on the other hand, goes out of itself as an expression of its circularity.

2.2.2 Effects give glory to their causes

Although the similarity involved in this circular motion was always

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[85] So also the Father dwells in us with the Son and the Holy Spirit, but as the Father is unoriginate, he is not spoken of as sent. ST I.43.5 cor.

[86] ST I.43.5 ad 2. Gilles Emery points out that this can be considered from another perspective: the one who knows the Son so as to be in some way conformed to him is loved by the Father with the Holy Spirit, who is the love of the Son (objective genitive) proceeding from the Father. "Trinity as Truth," 96.

[87] ST I.43.5 ad 1, cf ST I.38.2 cor and ad 1. Thomas talks of the indwelling of the Trinity, and it would seem that the Father is present as the giver, the Son as the gift object, and the Holy Spirit as the spirit of the gift.

[88] ST I.43.3, 43.4 obj 2, 43.5 obj 2, cor, ad 2; 43.6.

present in the discussion (especially through the notion of image), it is now time to look at it directly, particularly through the scholastic maxim "omne agens agit sibi simile" (the result of every action is something similar to the agent), and we shall do so by considering procession as generation, and the return as giving honour.[89]

2.2.2.1 *Omne agens agit sibi simile*

A good introduction is in the more compact investigations of the *Compendium Theologiae* and *Contra Gentiles*, where, as Philipp W. Rosemann points out, Thomas explores procession starting from inanimate objects and working up to the angels, in order to show the vestiges in creation of the processions in the Trinity.[90] Not surprisingly, it is the Trinitarian processions that meet Thomas' idea of a perfect procession, which is one:

- that proceeds as distinct without ever being separated;
- that is an entirely internal process that takes nothing from outside;
- and in which that which proceeds is the same as the principle from which it proceeds.

Thus he considers processes of generation (fire generates fire, and plants and animals generate something different but of the same species) and finds them lacking on all three counts. When he gets to sensitive animals, that which is generated in the imagination and stored in the memory at least remains within, but it starts from without. He then moves up to the procession produced by the intellect in

[89] Cited in *Prima Pars* alone at I.3.3 obj 2, I.19.2 cor, I.19.4 cor, I.44.2 obj 3, I.110.2 cor, I.115.1 cor.

[90] Rosemann, *Omne agens*, 263 et seqq., citing *Compendium* 1.52 and *Summa Contra Gentiles* 4.11. Unfortunately, in some places he does not make it clear which text he is following. The various degrees of this circular motion are also discussed, with reference to *Contra Gentiles* only, in Rudi A te Velde, *Participation and Substantiality in Thomas Aquinas* (Leiden: E J Brill, 1995) 274-277, and Simon Oliver, "Motion according to Aquinas and Newton," *Modern Theology* 17.2 (2001): 172-173.

humans, angels and God, cases we have already seen. And yet Thomas has not abandoned his original vestiges: he is wanting to show that this procession according to the intellect in God can also be called generation, and that the Word is also the "Son" of the Father. For Thomas, procession has aspects both of fecundity and of being known.

The reason that the procession "out", so to speak, is a generation or reproduction, is that any action resembles the agent: *omne agens agit sibi simile*. In this sense, everything acts for its own sake: "The agent is said to be the *finis* of the effect, insofar as the effect tends to a likeness of the agent; whence the form of the one generating is the *finis* of the act of generating."[91]

The corollary of this is that every effect makes its cause known. Indeed, from our human perspective, we cannot come to know essences directly, but only gradually and with great difficulty through their effects, as Rosemann notes.[92] Effects are signs of causes. Of course, there is a level of effect that bears only the most minimal resemblance to its cause. Smoke is an effect caused by fire; it is recognised as a sign of fire, but, to use modern terms, only as an indexical sign. Thomas would say that smoke is a sign of fire insofar as, being an effect, it indicates that there is some sort of cause.[93]

The bed produced by the carpenter resembles the carpenter, or at least it resembles the art in the carpenter's mind (hence, seeing a bed, we could identify its maker as being, say, a traditional Chinese artisan, Chippendale, or a member of the Bauhaus movement).[94]

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[91] "Agens dicitur esse finis effectus inquantum effectus tendit in similitudinem agentis: unde forma generantis est finis generationis." SCG 3.19.2, cf. *Compendium* 1.101.

[92] Rosemann, *Omne Agens*, 311-312, with reference to *In Symbolum Apostolorum* prologus.

[93] Rosemann, *Omne Agens*, 187, with reference to ST I.45.7 cor.

[94] ST III.62.1 cor.

2.2.2.2 Every effect honours its cause

Thus every effect makes its cause known, and makes it known as its cause, its principle, its superior. Recalling that for Thomas *honor* is "nothing other than a certain protestation of the excellence of someone's goodness,"[95] we could say that the circularity that is the basic microstructure of the universe means that every effect shows *honor* to its cause. Moreover, when *honor* is put into words it is praise, and when this leads to striking knowledge of someone's excellence, then this is glory. Ambrose' definition of glory - "clara cum laude notitia" - is repeated a number of times by Thomas.[96] Of course, the knowledge of God (or of God's goodness) is glory antonomastically ("I will not yield my glory to another" Is 42:8), and this glory is held most excellently by the Son, who is the "splendour of his glory."[97] Although Thomas normally talks of God's goodness as the ultimate end of all things, he does sometimes talk of God creating for the sake of God's glory.[98] Glory in the *Prima Pars* is particularly obvious when we consider the "return to God" of the angels, the most subsistent of all creatures, for they are always "talking" to God in praise and admiration, but only occasionally "talk" to each other.[99] The songs of the angels are not to be considered as a more advanced form of the return to God found in lower creatures, for Thomas' universe works from the top down rather than from the bottom up. The perfect return found in the angels is precisely what makes them more subsistent, more really being, and it is in the lower creatures that an impoverished

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95 ST II-II.103.2 cor; cf ST II-II.103.1 cor.

96 The *Index Thomisticus* lists 13 places. In the *Summa* it is found at I-II.2.3 obj 2 and cor, II-II.103.1 ad 3 and, noting its relation to a definition by Cicero, II-II.132.1 obj 3. http://www.corpusthomisticum.org/it/index.age

97 *Super Hebraeos* cap. 1, lect. 2 M26.

98 Divine goodness at ST I.19.2 cor, ad 2, 3; I.19.3 cor, I.19.5 cor, I.44.4 cor, ad 1, I.47.2 cor; divine glory at I.65.2 cor.

99 ST I.107.3 ad 2.

form of return is found.[100]

2.2.2.3 Giving honour to God by sharing in the divine governance

But honour is given not only when a creature returns directly to the first cause, but also when that creature itself acts as a cause. For when a higher cause operates through a lower cause, it is the higher cause that is operating more powerfully, that is more present in the effect, than the secondary cause.[101] Thomas not only notes that God governs creation through secondary causes, but devotes most of his treatment of governance to the operation of those secondary causes.[102] Thomas devotes less attention to angelic praise of God than to the locutions by which higher angels illuminate lower ones.[103]

Angels can also act upon material creation, imparting to them motion (in the broad sense) that has God's goodness as its final end. This could be causing the celestial bodies to move with the motion proper to them, moving terrestial bodies, or, for a rational creature, an act of illumination. Indeed, if we consider the two questions about the power of angels over material things in general (Q 110) and over human beings (Q 111), it seems that the former is the preparation for the latter. Because human knowledge, unlike angelic knowledge, starts in the senses, it would seem that, as non-corporeal creatures angels cannot illuminate people: but, having shown the possibilities and the limits of angelic power over bodies, Thomas can then show how angels can illuminate us, and can affect our imagination and even our

[100] This point was made by Michael Hanby at a deparmental seminar at Nottingham University, 15th August 2011.

[101] *Super Librum de Causis Expositio* 1.

[102] ST I.103.6. Q 104-105 are about direct governance by God, q 106-119 about governance through secondary causes.

[103] ST I.107.1-3. Their locutions also include asking for illumination either from God or from a higher angel, but the very act of asking is an acknowledgement of the superiority of the one addressed, and so is an act of giving honour. ST I.107.3 cor, cf. II-II.83.3 cor.

sensitive powers (for it is through these that we know), but cannot directly control our will.[104] And it is the illumination of people, that part of governance that leads people to their God-given end, that is the true focus of angelic power of corporeal creation; after all, the movement of the celestial spheres is for the sake of our journey to God, and will stop when that journey comes to an end at the final judgement.[105] In all this, the honour is due to God - indeed, we often do not even know that an illumination has come to us through the ministry of angels.[106]

The last topic in *Prima Pars* (questions115-119) is the way that corporeal creation shares in God's governance. There is one case of illumination here, for one human being can teach another - but only by providing exterior help to an intellect of the same rank;[107] and thus an angel, whose mind is of higher rank and who does not learn through the senses, cannot be taught by a human being.[108] But the main focus of this section is generation, which for corporeal creatures means replicating the substantial form in different matter. As we have seen, generation is a long way from the perfect processions of the Trinity, but it is still connected to it, for we talk of the generation of the Son by the Father.[109]

2.2.2.4 Human reproduction

As in the discussions referred to above that showed the vestiges of the Trinity in creation, Thomas noted the power of an elemental form to impress itself on

[104] Illumination ST I.111.1, imagination I.111.3, senses I.111.4, will I.111.2. Of course, these extensive but limited powers can also be used against us by angels in rebellion against God. ST I.114.
[105] *Scriptum* 4.48.2.2, SCG 4.97.2-3, *De Potentia* 5.5, *Quodlibet* 7.5.1, *Compendium* 1.171, *Super Ioannem* 6.5 (M940); the incomplete *Summa*, of course, has no tract on the general resurrection.
[106] ST I.111.1 ad 3.
[107] ST I.117.1 cor.
[108] ST I.117.2 cor.
[109] ST I.27.2.

other matter, and, if powerful enough, to do so at a distance, as fire can generate fire. Souls, being superior to elemental forms, do this in two ways: without a medium (like fire) through the process of nutrition, and with a medium (or instrument), through reproduction.[110] This medium is taken from food by the nutritive power and then the generative power uses it as an instrument. Thomas takes some care to argue that the matter which becomes semen was never properly part of the human body, and in particular he rejects the idea that semen contains a tiny piece of each different part of the body, as though it contained some *homunculus*. In lower animals a bit cut off may develop into the complete animal, but not in higher ones.[111] Thomas is not interested in such cases, but in cases where the form exceeds or goes out of the body it is in, not in its being but in its action - and this is one of his objections to the atomism of Democritus.[112]

Because the semen is an instrument, this *virtus* is more in the nature of a movement of the generating soul, it flows through the semen in the same way that the form of the bed in the mind of the carpenter flows through the saw or axe.[113] Thomas here talks of a *spiritus* present in semen, with the word meant in a corporeal sense;[114] he also talks of a *seminalis ratio*. And he also notes that in this *spiritus* there is a certain heat from the power of the celestial bodies. When the semen reaches the properly disposed material within the mother, this force transmutes that matter, which already has a dormant vegetative soul, so that is brought to the act of a sensitive soul. Then the semen dissolves, the *spiritus* dissipates, and the sensitive soul, through its nutritive power, builds up the rest of the body.[115]

[110] ST I.118.1 cor.
[111] ST I.119.2 cor.
[112] ST I.115.1 ad 5, cf cor.
[113] ST I.118.1 ad 3.
[114] The *spiritus* makes it foamy and thus white. ST I.118.1 ad 3.
[115] ST I.118.1 ad 4.

As a subsistent form the human soul must come into being in its own right, and as a spiritual reality it cannot be generated by a merely corporeal reality, and thus Thomas insists that God creates each human soul.[116] This creates a problem, for it seems to deny that human beings actually generate human beings, making *sibi simile*. Thomas replies that just as the *virtus* in the seed disposes the matter to receive the soul, but the soul gives the form, so the whole of the corporeal nature acts as God's instrument and disposes the matter so that it is ready for God to give the form, with the implication that he can still appeal to his earlier statement that it does not matter if one says something is brought about by the instrument or by the principal agent.[117] This is a less developed way of talking about instrumental causality than we shall find in his discussions of the humanity of Christ and the sacraments.

2.2.2.4 The possibility of communication

Two things deserve comment at this point. One is that Thomas takes it as evidence of superiority that a form in matter can inform additional matter not merely by direct contact, but through a medium. The inferior way of acting is allied to the nutritive power, eating and digesting the other; the superior way of acting is communication, and is allied to the spread of ideas, such as the form of the bed in the mind of the carpenter. The second is the rôle of *spiritus*, and that deserves a new subsection

[116] ST I.118.2 cor.
[117] ST I.118.2 ad 3; cf ST I.118.1 cor.

2.2.3 "Archaic" themes in Thomas' thought

As we move to the second point we should consider that scholars like to show how the thought of Thomas takes the insights of the great philosophers and develops them further. Thus in examining the circular nature of causality in Thomas, Rosemann also shows its Neoplatonic origins, and indeed its antecedents in Plato and Aristotle. But further, he shows how this circularity is modelled on very material things: For Plato both procreation and the exercise of reason serve as paradigms of the cyclical nature of being, and Aristotle, starting with biological examples, argued that all cause-effect relationships involve such a seed-like δυνάμει ὄν, an embedded material potential to transmit form from cause to effect, and yet at the same time these processes imitate the divine.[118] Now, Thomas retains these early elements in his own work, and through them we can establish parallels between Thomas' thought and the thought of pre-philosophical cultures, which will prove very useful later in talking of grace and gift.

2.2.3.1 The Christian context: *spiritus*

I shall start with the *spiritus* involved in human procreation. Thomas talks of similar spirits in the immediately preceding question, where, discussing the "evil eye," he notes that the spirits of the body can be affected by strong imaginations, and that this particularly happens around the eye, and that these spirits can then spread a certain distance through the surrounding air.[119] Thus menstruating women who look at new and pure mirrors can give them an impurity (so says Aristotle), and when the soul is vehemently aroused to malice ("as happens

[118] Rosemann, *Omne Agens*, Plato and Aristotle 33-62, Neoplatonists 63-101, with summaries at 61-62 and 101.

[119] ST I.117.3 ad 2; cf *Super Galatos* 3.1 (M117)

especially in old women"), this can make the person's gaze "venomous and noxious", particularly for little children who are sensitive to these sorts of impressions. Thomas makes it clear that he is not committed to this explanation; his main aim is to avoid the human soul acting upon any body other than its own. We should not get sidetracked, therefore, by the limitations of the natural science of the thirteenth century, but we can note that for Thomas *spiritus* denotes subtlety, being hidden or invisible, and an impulse to movement - hence, he says, the word *spiritus* is also applied to the wind.[120]

Thus, in *Prima Pars*, as well as Neoplatonic *exitus-reditus*, we find other themes: there is going out in the sense of "excess," fecundity or reproduction, honour and glory, and spirit, which is impulse but might also be wind. Thomas O'Meara tries identify this structuring principle with the concept of "grace," which he glosses as a "vital force."[121] If we too readily interpret this as grace in the narrow technical sense of sanctifying grace, we shall have lost that wider reference that occasioned the development of a concept of "grace" which could then be taken up by Christian writers.[122] Indeed, under the title of "grace" (closely associated with "honour") this wider concept was the particular study of Julian Pitt-Rivers and his colleagues in the context of Mediterranean cultures, recognising that it has its own unique concept in each culture: the *baraka* of the inhabitants of the Moroccan Rif, the *indarra* of the

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[120] *Super Ioannem* cap. 14, lect. 4 (M1916). Cf Emery, "Trinity as Truth," 110.

[121] O'Meara, "Grace," 149. He does not go beyond "vital force" to explore the aspects we have mentioned.

[122] And O'Meara does too readily move in that direction. Romanus Cessario OP is right to point out that we should not see grace (sc. sanctifying grace) everywhere. As if to oppose this emphasis on grace, Cessario then gives his own version of the structure to the *Summa*, "not as a singular circular movement (thus, Chenu) but rather in terms of concentric circles, each manifesting its own degree of *necessity*." "Is Aquinas' *Summa* only about grace?" in *Ordo Sapientiae et Amoris: Image et message de saint Thomas d'Aquin à travers les récents études historiques, herméneutiques, et doctrinales: homage au professeur Jean-Pierre Torrell OP à l'occasion de son 65e anniversaire*, ed. Carlos-Josaphat Pinto De Oliveira OP (Fribourg: Éditions Universitaires Fribourg Suisse, 1993), 198, 206 emphasis added.

Basques, the *gracia* of the Andalusians, and so on.[123] Trying to summarise it, he speaks of a particular type of *exitus* and then of a *reditus* that acknowledges its source:

> The only general rule that can be cited is that grace is always something extra, over and above "what counts," what is obligatory or predictable; it belongs on the register of the extraordinary (hence its association with the sacred). Nevertheless, when a favor has been done the return of grace is always expected.[124]

But the other factors we mentioned are present in the individual cases. *Indarra* is closely connected with reproduction and vitality, with the honour or prestige that enables the householder to maintain a harmonious house, and yet it can also mean a gust of wind.[125] *Baraka* is both outside of calculation and reciprocal services (and thus in excess), and is associated with fertility, as well as a power to perform miracles and prodigies.[126]

2.2.3.2 The animist context: *hau*

But even what we see in these societies is the product of a dialogue with Christianity (or some related monotheism) and particularly its own concept of grace: *indarra*, for instance, enables Mary to conceive the Son of God.[127] And at one point Pitt-Rivers, whose major work was done in Andalusia, explicitly takes the theological meaning of grace first and then sees the others as extensions.[128] But this

[123] J G Peristiany and Julian Pitt-Rivers, eds., *Honor and Grace in Anthropology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

[124] Julian Pitt-Rivers, "Postscript: the place of grace in anthropology," in *Honor and Grace in Anthropology*, ed. J G Peristiany and Julian Pitt-Rivers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 217.

[125] Sandra Ott, "*Indarra*: some reflections on a Basque concept," in *Honor and Grace in Anthropology*, ed. J G Peristiany and Julian Pitt-Rivers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 193-194.

[126] Pitt-Rivers, "Postscript," 231; Raymond Jamous, "From the death of men to the peace of God: violence and peace-making in the Rif," in *Honor and Grace in Anthropology*, ed. J G Peristiany and Julian Pitt-Rivers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 178-179.

[127] Ott, "*Indarra*," 193.

[128] Pitt-Rivers, "Postscript,"235. Pitt-Rivers appeals to Émile Benveniste for this originally religious meaning of *gratia*, and while it is true that Benveniste *says* this, all he *argues* is that the word was originally associated with giving that expected no return, which includes the gifts of the gods and

cannot explain why the word "grace" would be applied to God in the first place, for words applied to God, even if they more truly describe him, are taken first from descriptions of human affairs.[129] Pitt-Rivers suggests that the Polynesian pair *hau* and *mana* are concepts of the same order as grace and honour, but are the product of a polytheistic culture.[130] Moreover, as we shall see in Chapter Four, independently of the work of Pitt-Rivers there has been a dispute about *hau* because of the use Marcel Mauss makes of it when discussing the gift, so we shall look at it more closely.

Tamati Ranapiri, the leading Maori informant of Elsdon Best, begins his description of *hau* as a concept in human affairs by saying that it "is not the wind that blows," so we are already with something that, like *spiritus*, can also be applied to a gust of air.[131] Mauss talks of *hau* as spirit, and although this is disputed by Marshall Sahlins, all that the latter manages to prove is that *hau* is not the same as *wairua*, a concept that would seem to correspond to Thomas' *anima*.[132] The *wairua* is more powerful than *anima*, as it can leave the body in a dream and act elsewhere, but still this is an *excessus* (in the sense of going or travelling out) in being rather than an *excessus* in acting. The excess in action belongs to *hau*, which Best at one point defines in terms of excess in the sense of superfluity or extending beyond; and yet is also has the meanings of fertility and of prestige.[133] And like the *spiritus* that

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thanks to them; and that the word could then also be applied in more strictly economic contexts. *Indo-European Language and Society*, 159-162.

[129] ST I.13.6 cor.

[130] Pitt-Rivers, "Postscript," 237; cf Julian Pitt-Rivers, *Mana* (London: The London School of Economics and Political Science, 1974).

[131] Elsdon Best, "Maori Forest Lore . . . Part III" in *Transactions of the New Zealand Institute* 42 (1909) , 431, 439 cited by Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies*, tr. Ian Cunnison (New York: W W Norton, 1967), 8-9. Mauss connects *hau* with the Latin *spiritus* as having the same two meanings, 86n 26.. Marshall Sahlins gives another translation of this passage. *Stone Age Economics* (London: Tavistock, 1974), 151-152.

[132] Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics*, (London: Tavistock, 1974), 165-168

[133] Elsdon Best, "Spiritual Concepts of the Maori," *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 9 (1900): 193, cited by Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics*, 82.

produces the evil eye, it can also be used for evil purposes.[134]

An observation made by Étienne Gilson can help us understand what Thomas is doing with this collection of phenomena which we can link under the term *hau*. Gilson notes that Plato's idea of the Good was not a god, for the ideas were intended as a superior form of explanation to the animistic Greek gods: the result of this push was that when Aristotle re-instated a god at the summit of being, "the Greeks had gained an indisputably rational theology, but they had lost their religion." These impersonal forces did not care about our lives, nor did they inspire devotion.[135] It would take Christianity to deepen metaphysics so that religion could re-emerge in a purified form. Gilson also notes that where divinity is modelled on ideas, on essences, we end up with an essentialist metaphysics, causality is reduced to a principle of sufficient reason, and God thus becomes both *causa sui* and the ground of all else that is.[136] This, of course, is one aspect of the ontotheological God rejected by Heidegger and, following him, Chauvet: "Before this *Causa sui* humans can neither fall to their knees in fear, nor play instruments, sing or dance."[137] There is a widespread agreement that there was another element in Greek thought, evident in the pre-Socratics, that counter-balanced this tendency. In a work that we shall consider in detail at the end of this thesis, Jacques Derrida contrasts the *post-"cartésien"* world in which nature is an "order of necessities," with an earlier view in which nature is the "grand, generous and genial bestower to whom all returns" and so that the "others" of nature (art, law, society, freedom, etc.) return to her, where *phuein* still lies behind nature as a giving that gives birth and gives form,

[134] Marshall Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics*, 162-165.
[135] Étienne Gilson, *God and Philosophy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1941), 1-37; quote on 34.
[136] Étienne Gilson, *L'être et l'essence*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Vrin, 1962), 177-183.
[137] Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 62, citing Martin Heidegger, *Identité, Q. 1*, 306.

and fortune and necessity do not oppose each other.[138] This, of course, is the world in which it made sense to talk of *hau*.

Now my contention is that it is precisely this element of archaic thought (archaic "religious" thought, if we can tolerate such an anachronism) which Thomas has not merely incorporated into his theology, but has made a vital feature of the mystery of God and the rationale for the inclusion in the *Summa* of any created thing. This is not the "productionist" causality that Chauvet complains about, nor can we say that for Thomas "spiritual" means merely the opposite of "sensible" in the way that "intelligible" might.[139]

2.2.4 Full of grace and truth, we have seen his glory

Our argument has not been exhaustive or rigorous. What we have done is to set the stage for a close examination of one aspect of *hau* - its relation to the gift - and the use that Thomas makes of it. "Gift," of course, is another name for the Holy Spirit, but gift is neither a purely natural phenomenon (like human reproduction) nor even a merely intellectual one (like producing concepts), but a moral one, and so that examination will need to take place in the context of the whole purpose of the *Secunda Pars*. We have done this by linking the structure of the *Summa* to grace and truth - whose fulness in the Son gives glory to God - and to spirit and truth, the conditions for true worship. This is not surprising, for the *Summa* is about "Catholic truth" and "what pertains to the Christian religion," and religion, as we shall see, is the virtue by which we give due honour to God.[140] This

[138] Jacques Derrida, *Given Time I: Counterfeit Money*, tr. Peggy Kamuf (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992) 127-128.
[139] Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 21-26; 462
[140] ST I. prologus; II-II.81.1 cor, ad 1, ad 4.

approach to Thomas may not be the standard one, but it will provide us with foundations for understanding what he says about the sacraments.

CHAPTER THREE
MORALITY EXPLAINED AS ECONOMICS

3.1 The existence of an "economy" in the thought of Thomas

"All religions, in essence, direct and distribute time, attention and devotion. Religions are patterns of life through which it is claimed that life is enriched. If there is an opposition between God and money, then fundamentally it comes down to this: wealth contains its own principles according to which time, attention and devotion are allocated."[1] Thomas would not disagree with Goodchild's description of religion.[2] And while Goodchild spends his time showing that the use of money implies things we would more often associated with religion (credit, which is the equivalent of faith[3]), what I want to show in this chapter is that certain terms we tend to think of as more naturally related to money (earning, price, debt, redemption) actually have their true home in the world of religion, indeed, that the religious life forms an economy, although one that operates on principles that do not simply compete with a monetary economy, but subvert and subordinate it. Indeed, it has been observed that when the possibility of merit was removed from the Christian religion, the energy of the devout became directed to material profit.[4]

"Economy," as opposed to "theology" has been used since the New Testament to denote the arrangement by which the Trinitarian God saves us, but, as the Vulgate testifies, here οἰκονομία can simply be replaced by the slightly more

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1 Philip Goodchild, *The Theology of Money* (London: SCM Press, 2007), 6.

2 See his discussion of religion, ST II-II.81-91, especially 83.14 (time), 83.13 (attention) and 82 (devotion).

3 Philip Goodchild, *The Theology of Money* (London: SCM Press, 2007), 10-11 *et passim*.

4 Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, tr. Talcott Parsons (London: Routledge, 2001), 73-74 and R H Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (London: J Murray, 1936), 105-111, 142. The exact process of this transfer is far from simple; more insight will be offered at 4.3.3.

abstract *dispensatio*.[5] The emphasis is on the arrangement by which God gives spiritual goods to us, rather than the exchanges that lead to our spiritual enrichment, in line with Aristotle's understanding of οἰκονομία as household management, and, according to the *Index Thomisticus*, this last sense is the only one in which Thomas uses the word *oeconomia*. My contention, however, is that for Thomas the believer is involved in exchanges of valuables with God, and that there is a structure that mediates those exchanges, an economy in the modern sense of the word, and that this economy underlies his whole account of morality, as an examination of *Secunda Pars* will show.

3.1.2 Economy and the structure of *Prima Secundae*

3.1.2.1 The need for merit

According to our understanding of the structure of the *Summa*, *Secunda Pars* should deal with the truth in the human mind, acknowledging our origin in God and bringing about our return.

In his prologue, Thomas uses two ideas to describe it. First, there is the human being as the image of God because endowed with intellect and the power of choice, and so the principle of his or her own actions. Then he notes, having dealt in *Prima Pars* with the exemplar and the things that proceed from him by his power and will, he will now do the same with the image. His concern, then, is with the acts that proceed; but acts, as Thomas often tells us, obtain their species from their ends, so Thomas begins by considering the ultimate end of human life, which is the beatitude

[5] 1 Cor 9:17; Eph 1:10, 3:2, 9; Col 1:25; at 1 Tim 1:4 it is translated by *aedificatio*. By contrast, when refering to the stewardship of the unjust steward (οἰκονόμος /vilicus), we get *vilicatio* and *vilicare* (Lk 16:1-4)

that is God.[6] Thus, as was the case in *Prima Pars*, "proceed" seems also to include return. Further, as is obvious from the contents and is made clear in the prologue to *Secunda Secundae*, although he is dealing with acts (the means by which we achieve or deviate from that end), he is concerned with the source of those acts, the virtues, gifts, vices, etc., in the human mind. And when he considers those sources, he finds some that are external - law and grace - so we see that what ends in God also came from him. And even the role of the Spirit is repeated: the New Law is the grace of the Holy Spirit, and even the infused virtues are perfected by the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Thomas carefully concludes that our beatitude will consist in seeing the essence of God.[7] But, unlike God, whose being and beatitude are the same thing, for rational creatures this operation is beyond our natural powers.[8] Thomas does not then conclude that beatitude comes as a sheer undeserved gift (for it is only at the end of *Prima Pars* that he considers grace), but rather that if beatitude is to be the end of human actions, our actions must in some meaningful sense be ordered towards it and able to achieve it, and therefore it must be earned, as Thomas has argued in *Prima Pars* when speaking of angels.[9] It is possible for someone to enjoy beatitude straight away with its existence, but as beatitude is natural for God alone, it is appropriate that God alone enjoys beatitude immediately. Creatures enjoy beatitude through either one operation (angels) or many (humans), and among humans, therefore, although they share the one nature, the depth of their beatitude varies.

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6 ST I-II.1 prologus

7 ST I-II.2-3, culminating in I-II.3.8.

8 ST I-II.5.5 cor.

9 ST I.62.4 cor. As John Milbank points out, before the Late Middle Ages, theologians had not yet "set divine and human activity over against each other" and "grace and merit were not [. . .] in competition with each other." "The Transcendality of the Gift," in *The Future of Love: Essays in Political Theology* (London: SCM, 2009), 361.

There is one case, however, of a human enjoying beatitude from the first moment of existence - Christ, who is simultaneously God - and through the merit of Christ the baptized who die as infants enjoy beatitude through an operation that is not really their own. So, according to the *ordo* of divine wisdom, creatures come to enjoy beatitude in a variety of ways, and the many actions by which (adult) humans do so are called merits (*merita*).[10] Bernard Catão sums it up by saying that it is a fundamental anthropological principle that human actions attain their end by merit.[11]

3.1.2.2 What can and cannot be the basis of merit

Having established this principle, Thomas goes on to investigate the sort of human actions that will help us or hinder us on the way to beatitude. First he deals with actions in themselves - speaking only generally in *Prima Secundae* - then with their principles. The actions in themselves need to be divided into voluntary and involuntary, and having made this division he considers voluntary (properly human) acts, and the passions (which we also share with animals). In considering the principles of human action, he first considers the interior principles. He passes over the powers of the soul that were dealt with in *Prima Pars*, and looks at habits - in general, and then as virtues and vices. Then he looks at the external principles, law and grace. Both with the virtues and with law he starts by considering something purely natural (but nonetheless God-given), and then looks at how God can raise it to a higher level. As interior principles there are natural virtues, then there are the theological virtues and the other infused virtues, and finally the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the chief of which is wisdom - the beatitudes and the fruits of the

[10] ST I-II.5.7

[11] Bernard Catão, *Salut et rédemption chez s. Thomas d'Aquin: l'acte sauveur du Christ* (Paris: Aubier, 1964), 12.

Holy Spirit are included here not as additional principles of human action, but as consequences of the gifts that help us to understand them more fully.[12] Although, precisely because they go beyond reason, their workings are not subjected to a long rational analysis, these gifts represent a high point in Thomas' moral theology, and it is significant that Thomas prefers to consider them according to their biblical name, "spirits," with its connotations of impulse.[13] Similarly, with the law we have natural law (given by God but as arising out of the God-given natural principles) and the human law which is a particular application of it. Then there is divine law, revealed in addition to nature, which itself has the divisions of the Old Law and the New Law, the second being the equivalent of the grace of the Holy Spirit implanted in our hearts.[14]

Once this has been firmly established, in the last question of *Prima Secundae* Thomas deals with merit. For it is through the infused virtues and the gifts which truly elevate the operation above the purely human level and make it also the working of the Holy Spirit that an action can be simultaneously both truly imputable to a human person, and also not merely congruously but also condignly worthy of beatitude - but only "by the presupposition of the divine *ordinatio*."[15] Not only can we merit beatitude, but once we are in grace we can merit more grace. And when Thomas has done this, he is satisfied with what he has said about morals in general, and will move on to discuss the specific virtues, vices, gifts, precepts and states of life in *Secunda Secundae*.

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[12] ST I-II.69.1

[13] ST I-II.68.1 cor, II-II.45.1 cor, ad 2, 45.4 ad 2. Among those who highlight this role of the gifts is Yves Congar, "Le Saint-Esprit dans la théologie de l'agir moral," in *Thomas d'Aquin: sa vision de théologie et de l'Eglise* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1984), 11-12.

[14] ST I-II.106.1 cor.

[15] ST I-II.114.1 cor.

3.1.2.3 Economy as *ordo* or structure

Not only is *Prima Secundae* structured around the question of the meriting of beatitude by human beings, but it also considers this in terms of the divine *ordo* or *ordinatio*.[16] This order comes from God but also somehow exists in things, for Thomas argues that human operation is a prerequisite to beatitude, not because of God's weakness, but "so that the *ordo* in things should be upheld."[17] This *ordo* is like language: not innate to the human being, but given from the outside, and necessary for the proper operation of the human being. Today we would use "structure" to refer to such a reality.

The closest parallel in Thomas is probably the second of the two senses he gives to *natura*, especially in his discussions on original sin, which is a sin, not of the person, but of the *natura*.[18] In its first sense, nature is whatever arises from the principles of a thing; because of this, what is natural in this sense cannot be lost without the thing being changed into another thing. "The nature remains intact" is a line from Dionysius that Thomas cites repeatedly.[19] As human nature in this sense remains intact after original sin, this is not the locus of original sin and its immediate effects. The second sense of nature includes those things that are given to a nature from another source so that what is fitting to that nature can be achieved. It is at this level that original sin affects human nature. The effect of original sin in us is the loss of the original gift to the nature that enabled it to achieve what it should achieve, a gift Thomas refers to by the traditional name original justice. What is more, nature

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[16] For a good discussion of Thomas on *ordo*, and how his approach differs from that of the Scotist notion of *acceptatio*, see Joseph P Wawrykow, *God's Grace and Human Action: 'Merit' in the Theology of Thomas Aquinas* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), 180-189.

[17] ST I-II.5.7 ad 1.

[18] SCG 4.52.11, cf ST I-II.81.2 cor.

[19] According to the *Index Thomisticus* at least 17 times, in *Scriptum super Sententiis*, *Summa Theologiae*, *De Veritate*, *De Malo*, *Quodlibet* 5, and *Super Ioannem*.

in both senses is propagated. The power of Adam to hand on human nature in the first sense (body and, with God's help, soul) remains intact after sin; the power to hand on nature in the second sense (as possessing original justice) is impaired.

A further term Thomas uses in this regard is "status," which allows him to talk of the various historical states of humanity in a way that lacks the dangerous ambiguity of "historical natures."[20]

Finally, a structure can be considered from the point of view of the people who come under it, and this more concrete approach better suits Thomas' mentality. For him, when the word is used metaphorically, a "body" is "one multitude ordered for one purpose [*in unum*] according to distinct acts or offices."[21] Thus all such uses of "body" for Thomas are ways of talking about structures. In particular, as we shall see later, membership of the "body" of Christ is integrally connected with sharing his merit, and thus the "body" of Christ can be taken as referring to an economy.[22]

Thus, although Thomas does not use the term *oeconomia* in the sense we use "economy," he does have terms which point to something we would recognise as a structure, and which enable those exchanges between people and God by which they merit beatitude.

3.2 Justice and the economy

3.2.1 Strict justice and the virtues allied to it

Because an economy entails a system of exchanges, implicit in it there is a justice. Thomas himself begins his discussion of merit by considering such things

[20] ST I.94.2 cor.
[21] ST III.8.4 cor.
[22] ST III.19.4 cor.

as *merces* (wages) and *pretium* (price, but also value and prize), and even the *pretium iustum*.[23] But he also notes here that justice, in its strictest sense, only applies between equals; between others there is only justice *secundum quid*, and between God and humans there is *maxima inaequalitas*. This distinction in fact will order his discussion of justice in *Secunda Secundae*, as we shall see in greater depth later when we look at gratitude.

What Thomas is clear about is that in the justice of this economy, God becomes a debtor not to us, but to himself, "inquantum debitum est ut sua ordinatio impletur."[24] Our actions do nothing to God so that we have some claim on God, but rather they increase God's glory, which is the goal of all God's works. Indeed, our action would not have "*rationem meriti* except by the presupposition of the divine *ordinatio*." The very economy itself is God's gift to us.[25]

3.2.2 Condign merit

Given that an act proceeding from a human will is in value far below the infinite good of beatitude, but God, having promised to do so, can reward it with eternal life according to some sort of proportion, it would seem that we could merit only congruously.[26] This would solve the aporia arising from the *maxima inaequalitas*, but Thomas does not see it as corresponding to the data of revelation. Moreover, as we shall see, declaring the merit to be merely congruous is merely shifting the whole of the problem of sharing in the divine nature to some

[23] ST I-II.114.1 cor.
[24] ST I-II.114.1 ad 1, ad 2, ad 3.
[25] Cf "One receives gift *as* the gift of an always preceding gift-exchange." John Milbank, "Can a gift be given? Prolegomena to a Future Trinitarian Metaphysic," *Modern Theology* 11.1 (January 1995): 150.
[26] Thomas has earlier argued that the same beatific vision will be enjoyed by all, but in differing degrees of intensity, according to our merits. ST I-II.5.2 sed contra and cor.

eschatological time: breaking it up into two problems of an imperfect sharing in grace now that is rewarded with a perfect sharing in glory in the future actually corresponds better to our composite nature. For Thomas sees that any act of our free will that is considered meritorious by God is so because it is the act of the Holy Spirit at work in us, and also the act of one who, in the Holy Spirit, has been made a sharer in the divine nature.[27] A divine act is condignly deserving of eternal life. (Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange would make a distinction here between the merit of the Son, who is a divine Person, which is condign in strict justice, and our merit, condign in a looser sense, on account of the divine ordination to accept it.[28] Thus not only is there the gift of the economy, as a structure, that is a gift to the whole human race, but there is also an individual gift which enables individuals to take part in the economy, the gift of the grace of the Holy Spirit.

But to insist on condign rather than merely congruous merit is to imply that the price is not arbitrary, but true and just. Here it is worth recalling that for Thomas, the just price is determined according to the nature of the thing. Neither of the two exceptions granted by Thomas (covering the legitimate costs of the seller, or the spontaneous overpayment of a highly motivated buyer) applies here.[29] In other cases, paying more is paying for what is not there; it is untrue, and this, just as much as his objection to greed, is Thomas' reason against speculation.[30] Human buying and selling is instituted for mutual utility, and so it is the nature of a thing as it enters into human use, and not absolutely, that determines the price - Thomas refers to

[27] There is, of course, a significant difference in the way in which we share in the divine nature by grace and by glory, as we shall see shortly.

[28] Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange OP, *Grace: Commentary on the* Summa Theologica *of St. Thomas,* Ia IIae q. 109-114, tr. the Dominican Nuns, Corpus Christi Monastery (St Louis: Herder, 1952), 366-369.

[29] ST II-II.77.1 cor.

[30] ST II-II.77.4 cor, ad 1.

Augustine's remark that sometimes a horse is sold for more than a slave.[31] When Thomas takes the term "just price" and uses it outside the context of material commerce, the criterion is obviously no longer usefulness to humans, nor "usefulness" to God, since although God may want that something is on account of another thing, God himself never wants something on account of something else.[32] Rather, since God is the buyer and can set the price, it will be based upon the true nature of what is offered (even if it is not recognised as such by the "seller"[33]). So, although "just price" as a term may have originated in the field of commerce, it finds a truer application in the way that God deals with us: the language is analogous.[34]

To appreciate the economy we need to see how it is that we have something so precious in the eyes of God.

3.2.3 How charity merits

Thomas receives the tradition that acts of charity merit increase in charity now, and in the life to come the beatific vision at an intensity dependent upon the level of our charity in this life. What I want to do is to show that:

- the act of charity has a certain perfection in itself;
- there is a certain naturalness about an act of charity leading to an

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31 ST II-II.77.2 ad 3.

32 ST I.19.5 cor.

33 ST II-II.77.1 ad 1; Cf Thomas' comments on the parable of the sheep and the goats, *Super Matthaeum*, 25.3 (M2098).

34 Thus when Catão remarks that we can keep the term justice to describe these relations, even though it is not justice "properly speaking" but "analogously," we should recognise that anything analogously ascribed to God finds its higher truth there, and that "properly speaking" refers to the human origins of the word. *Salut et rédemption*, 58. Wawrykow, interpreting this "analogical" predication as a dilution of justice, and presumably trying to defend condign rather than merely congrous merit, reacts againt Catão, insisting on a "juridical" understanding of merit, while at the same time trying to avoid any "objectivization" of the relationship between God and the human person, or laws which are purely extrinsic to human life. Wawrykow, *God's Grace*, 29-31. We shall see in the next chapter that Thomas subverts his notion of strict justice in his treatment of the virtue of religion.

increase in charity;

- the act of charity is truly ours, yet is also a gift from God;
- the act of charity is offered to God;
- the act of charity is offered with a view to an increase in charity and a consequent increase in beatitude;
- we are aware of the value of our act of charity;
- in all this, God's hand is never forced, but it happens by God's arrangement;
- each increase of charity happens, not automatically, but as a special act of God towards the person concerned.

This will help us to see that Thomas' claim of condign merit is grounded in the rest of his theology, and that it ensures that we have a genuine economy, a true exchange of valuables within a structure that enables that exchange and makes clear the value of what is exchanged.

3.2.3.1 The interplay between knowledge and love

For Thomas, there are two operations that have God both as subject and object: knowledge and love, the operations he uses to explain the circular processions of the Trinity. We can perform these operations, therefore, as both directed to God and in virtue of a divine power working within us.[35] These are the operations, therefore, which can be the basis of condign merit and reward in an economy that operates between God and us.

We start, as Thomas does, with the reward, beatific vision, which is the

[35] ST I-II.62.1 cor, ad 3, 62.3 cor.

knowledge of the divine essence.[36] As the thing known is inside the knower, we shall in a certain sense have or possess God, although this does not entail comprehension. Moreover, while each of the blessed sees the totality of the divine essence, for it is utterly simple and has no parts, the capacity for seeing it can vary, depending on one's merit.[37] The vision is beatific, in other words, the enjoyment is consequent upon the gift.[38] We desire God, for God is the highest good, and we desire God for God's own sake. In the act of possessing the object of our desire through the operation of knowing, we enjoy it (*frui*).

If the reward is knowledge, then this leaves love as the operation by which we merit the reward. For condign merit, there must be a perfection of love to merit this greatest of rewards. Yet for Thomas love must be based on knowledge. Thomas deals with this aporia as follows.

For Thomas, love is a passion: of its very nature as having an object which is its end, it is caused by its object. This is manifestly true for love in the sensitive appetite, but it is also true, using "passion" in a more extended sense, for love in the intellectual appetite, the will.[39] Love is somehow elicited by the object of love; love breaks forth (*prorumpit*) if three conditions are present: goodness, knowledge and likeness.[40] Moreover, the knowledge and the likeness do not have to be perfect. The knowledge can simply be that this good thing exists;[41] the likeness can be the likeness of something in potency to something in act.[42] However, once the

[36] ST I-II.3.8 cor.
[37] ST I.12.4, 6,7, ST I-II.5.2 sed contra and cor.
[38] ST I-II.4.1-2.
[39] ST I-II.26.2 cor.
[40] ST I-II.27.1, 2 and 3. 27.4 shows that other passions only cause love if there is already a prior love.
[41] ST I-II.27.2 cor, ad 1 and ad 2.
[42] ST I-II.27.3 cor. The similarity of the loved object to the subject, being some sort of proportion existing between the two, will make it good simply to behold the object of love, and so the beloved object will also be beautiful. ST I-II.27.1 cor and ad 3; cf 27.2 cor, where, citing Aristotle *Ethics* IX, Thomas holds that not only is corporeal vision the basis of love of the senses, but the

object of love is known and there is some basis of similarity, the love itself can be perfect, not necessarily in the sense that it is loved as much as it is worthy of love, but at least in that the thing is loved to the extent that it is apprehended in itself.[43] Therefore a perfect love can be based on an imperfect knowledge and likeness.

However, it is not just any love of God which merits beatitude, but only charity.[44] Charity, Thomas says, is fundamentally a love of God which is friendship (as opposed to love of concupiscence).[45] In its two inferior forms, friendship is based on the pleasure or advantage one hopes to gain from the friend, but honourable friendship is based on something shared in common. Charity is friendship with God based upon the sharing of beatitude, and is distinguished from a purely natural love of God, where the basis is merely that God is our beginning and our end - we are created by God for his greater glory - without any reference to sharing in God's beatitude.[46] We should note that love of friendship extends also to those who belong to one's friend: in charity we can love all those who also will share in beatitude, first of all, our own selves, then our neighbour, then our own body.[47]

Thomas holds that, in a way, charity, even in this life, is perfect.[48] In terms of the beloved, charity cannot be perfect in that God is loved as much as he is worthy of love, because no creature can love the infinite goodness of God infinitely. In terms of the lover, however, charity can be perfect when the lover loves as much as she can. This is attained both in terms of act and in terms of habitus. Only in our

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contemplation of spiritual beauty or goodness is the basis of spiritual love.

43 ST I-II.27.2 ad 2.

44 ST I-II.114.2, 4.

45 ST II-II.23.1 cor.

46 ST I-II.109.3 cor and ad 1.

47 ST II-II.25, especially 25.12.

48 ST II-II.24.8 cor.

homeland will we be able *in actu* to always turn our heart directly and immediately to God. Here on pilgrimage it is possible to devote our whole attention to God and divine things to the exclusion of everything else except when the necessities of life intervene, and at least some can do this. But charity of its nature means that there is a habitus of placing our whole heart in God, at least to the extent that we do nothing contrary to divine love. This habitus is held by all those who have charity. This habitus is not simply and absolutely perfect, but perfect *secundum quid*. As it is a habitus, it is not destroyed by single actions contrary to it (venial sins).[49] Also, as a habitus, it can grow (become more intense); indeed, in this life charity is the way, "the more excellent way", because it can increase and charity itself leads to the increase of charity - so much so that in this way "to stand still is to go backwards."[50]

Thus we have the first point: with charity, we have something worthy to offer God in exchange for the reward.

3.2.3.2 The effects of love and the appropriateness of this exchange

When we consider the effects of love, we can see the appropriateness of this exchange. Thomas lists six effects: the ones relevant for our purposes are union, mutual indwelling (*inhaesio*), and ecstasy, to be considered only in terms of love as friendship.

Thomas notes a union of love at three levels. There is the union that causes love (substantial union in the case of self-love, union of likeness for love of others). There is the union that essentially is love, that is a certain fitting together (*coaptatio*) of affection, which is like substantial union, for the lover regards the

[49] ST II-II.24.10 cor,
[50] ST II-II.4 cor (citing 1 Cor 13); II-II.24.6 and obj 3.

beloved as he would himself. There is also the union which is the effect of love, the real union which love seeks: the desire is that the two would be one, but as this cannot be achieved without destroying one of them, at least they live together, talk together, etc.[51]

Mutual indwelling can take place at two levels, apprehension and appetite. At the level of apprehension the beloved is in the lover in that the lover's mind always dwells on the beloved, and the lover is in the beloved in that the lover strives for an interior knowledge of the beloved in every detail. At the level of affection the beloved is in the lover by inspiring the desires and emotions (rejoicing in their good, wanting things for them) from deep within (the *viscera caritatis*); and the lover is in the beloved as the lover regards his friend's things as his own (seeing the world with the friend's eyes, one might say).[52]

Similarly, there is an ecstasy of the appetite, wanting good for one's friend rather than for oneself, and an ecstasy of the apprehensive faculty. This latter takes one outside one's proper knowledge, either in madness or by being lifted to a higher way of knowing to understand things beyond sense and reason. Love merely disposes one for this intellectual ecstasy, by making one meditate on the beloved.[53]

We can see that the effects of love move in the direction of deepening knowledge. The *coaptatio* of affection provides a new level of similarity that could act as a base for further knowledge, and in the case of charity, where there is a co-operation with the Holy Spirit and a certain connaturality with God, we have the basis for the gift of wisdom *in via* and the beatific vision *in patria*; the mutual indwelling creates a desire for this intimate new knowledge; and the continual

[51] ST I-II.28.1 ad 2.
[52] ST I-II.28.2 cor.
[53] ST I-II.28.3 cor.

meditation on the beloved disposes the lover to be open to this new way of knowing. And this is what Thomas argues.[54]

3.2.3.3 How charity enables a real offering to God

If we are to offer something in love, it must first of all be ours. Love is in the will, and therefore it is something that is truly voluntary and truly ours. And yet also this love is the working of God. It is not possible by our own natural powers, but only because God gives us the knowledge (in faith) and gives us the beatitude which we have in hope,[55] and gives us the Holy Spirit because of likeness of the Son present in us in faith and hope.[56]

If we are to talk of exchange, there also must be a real handing over on our part. Now, while Thomas often simply talks of a good action (or a hardship endured) and then discusses its merit, at least occasionally in this regard he mentions a real handing over of something that is somehow directed towards God.

The clearest statement that this renunciation must be directed to God comes in one of the *quaestiones*. In discussing whether the death of Christ was necessary, or whether some lesser action would have sufficed, Thomas makes clear that any action of Christ was of infinite value, but that these actions were not directed to the saving of humanity in the way that Christ's passion was, so that the merit could be combined with the example and symbolic significance. "Two things are required for buying: the quantity of the price, and the deputation of that price towards buying

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[54] The gifts of the Holy Spirit are "higher perfections [than the virtues] according to which [someone] is disposed to being divinely moved." ST I-II.68.1 cor. Wisdom is the gift that corresponds to the union arising out of charity, which unites us to God. ST II-II.45.2 cor.

[55] Thomas does not explain in detail the proleptic way that hope works in this process, but it is clearly there in his works and his sacramental theology does not make sense without it.

[56] This gift of the Holy Spirit will be explained in greater detail in the discussion of baptism.

something."[57] However, this deputation of our acts of charity to eternal beatitude can be presumed. After all, beatitude is implicitly the ultimate goal of all our actions, although we often mistake that end and with our free will we choose badly the means to that final end;[58] "but the movement of the human mind to the enjoyment of the divine good is the proper act of charity, through which the acts of all the other virtues are ordered to this end."[59]

Showing that some sort of handing over takes place is a little harder. We can begin with the article about Christ meriting exaltation through his passion.[60] Thomas reminds us again that merit implies a sort of equality of justice. Then, just as the one who, through an unjust will, attributes to himself more than he is owed is justly deprived even of what he rightly has (as in the demand for four-fold restitution at Ex 22:1), so also the one who through a just will removes what he is entitled to earns that something more be given him in addition, *quasi* the wages of a just will (cf. Lk 14:11, "he who humbles himself will be exalted").

To give away "with a just will what one ought to have" has a paradoxical ring, particularly when we consider that Thomas takes as the definition of justice that it is "the enduring and constant will granting each his or her own right (*jus*)", and the act of justice is "nothing other than to render to each person what is his or her own."[61]

Indeed, for justice in its strict sense, which governs interactions between equals, it might well be a contradiction in terms. But between God and us, where there is *maxima inaequalitas*, interactions are not governed by justice in its strict

[57] *Quodlibet* II.1.2 cor.
[58] ST I-II.5.8 cor and ad 2; I-II.8.2 cor.
[59] ST I-II.114.4 cor.
[60] ST III.49.6 cor.
[61] ST II-II.58.1 tit; II-II.58.11 cor.

sense, but by religion.[62] According to this virtue whatever is given by a human to God is owed, and so religion is like justice, but it does not match the fulness of justice in that whatever we give cannot be equal to what we owe God.[63] From this it flows that whatever we give to God that is rightfully ours to give, we give with a just will - and one could only give to God with an unjust will if one gave what actually belonged to someone else.[64] The main interior act of religion is *devotio*, a "certain will of promptly handing over oneself to what pertains to the service (*famulatus*) of God", and, given that the human being is *per se potestativus*, our selves truly belong to us.[65] The first of the exterior acts is adoration, by which one disposes one's own body in the veneration of God.[66] But when we get to the second external act of religion, sacrifice, we find that giving to one's neighbour can also be giving to God, and thus meritorious.

3.2.3.4 Sacrifice

For our purposes, two things need to be clarified with regard to sacrifice: whether it is genuinely a case of giving something that is rightfully ours to God, and how far the category of sacrifice extends.

If we hold that the purpose of sacrifice is to placate God or to achieve the grace of forgiveness, then sacrifice would only be offered by sinners, and seem to

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62 ST II-II.57.1 cor and ad 3; 58.2 cor; 80.unicus cor.

63 ST II-II.80 unicus cor.

64 Cf ST II-II.86.3 cor, 88.8. According to Thomas' understanding, private property is a way of entrusting the *uti* (use) but not the *frui* of wordly goods to some who then have a duty to use them for the good of all, as a part of which a thing could belong to one person and not to another. There is no place here for something belonging to a human being and not at the same time to God. See Marcus Lefébure OP, "Private Property according to St Thomas and Recent Papal Encyclicals," in Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, vol. 38, *Injustice (2a2ae. 63-79)*, ed. Marcus Lefébure OP (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1975), 275-289.

65 ST II-II.82.1 cor, cf. I-II. prologue.

66 ST II-II.84 tit.

have very little to do with merit (apart from Christ's sacrifice); for, in the *Summa*, Thomas is adamant that only those in a state of grace can merit.[67] Put another way, the sinner owes infinite satisfaction to God and thus owns nothing to give up with a just will.[68] Thomas, however, recognises three motives for offering sacrifice.[69] Sacrifice can be offered to wipe away sin (the OT sin offerings), to preserve people in a state of grace, that is, peace and salvation (peace offerings), and so that the human spirit might be perfectly united with God, which will reach its full effect in glory (holocausts). The last two categories are offered by people already in a state of grace, that is, by people who have something in their own right which they can offer to God and expect to merit thereby. Moreover, in his explanation of why offering sacrifice is required by natural law, he makes no mention of sin, but bases his argument solely on the common human perception of our own weakness and the need to be helped by something superior, which all call "god".[70] Although it is not mentioned in scripture, he is sure that even Adam offered sacrifice.[71]

As to what the term "sacrifice" covers, Thomas has both a broad and narrow definition. Broadly, sacrifice is "a certain special act having praise because it is done in reverence of God," and so any act of any other virtue, praiseworthy in

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67 ST I-II.114.5, 7. Under the influence of Augustine, Thomas developed his understanding of this point, as is well described by Wawrykow, *God's Grace*, 37-38, 53, 266-276. Compare, for instance the interpretation of "facienti quod in se est Deus non denegat gratiam" at *Scriptum* 1.48.1.3, cor, ad 1; 2.4.1.3 sed contra 3, 2.28.1 3 ad 5, 2.28.1.4 cor, 2.28.2.2 cor, 2.29.1.3.ad 3, 3.25.2.1.1 ad 2, 4.20.1 sol. 1; 4.20.1.1.1 cor and ST I-II.109.6 obj 2 and ad 2 (references given by Wawrykow, 84-85n 47).

68 Cf ST III.1.2 ad 2.

69 ST III.22.2. Thomas also distinguishes between a mere sacrifice, a partial offering, and the total offering of a holocaust, using it as a type for understanding the difference between, say, one act of almsgiving and the lifelong vow of poverty. ST II-II.186.3 ad 6.

70 ST II-II.85.1 cor. Note how here he appeals to God as known by natural reason alone, as he also did for the same reason at II-II.81.1 sed contra. See Maxime Allard OP, *Que rendrai-je au Seigneur? Aborder la religion par l'éthique*, Paris: Cerf, 2004), 300.

71 ST II-II.85.1 ad 2. He does not clarify whether he would have done so if he had not sinned, but as the thesis develops we shall see that it is likely that Thomas imagined even an unfallen Adam would have carried out some sort of sacrifice.

itself (say, almsgiving or mortification of the body), when done for the reverence of God is a sacrifice. But some acts are not praiseworthy in themselves except in that they are done in reverence for God, and these "are properly called sacrifices, and belong to the virtue of religion."[72] Thomas shows how this agrees with Augustine's assertion, "True sacrifice is every good work which is done so that we inhere in God in holy fellowship," for the very desire to inhere in God belongs to reverence for God.[73] He goes on to give examples of the sorts of goods we can offer to God in sacrifice: the good of our souls, the good of our body, and external goods: thus, "mediately, when we share our goods with our neighbours for the sake of God," it is a sacrifice.[74] The same arguments occur in the *Super De Trinitate*.[75]

Therefore, through a consideration of the virtue of religion and the nature of sacrifice, we see that for Thomas any act done in charity is an offering to God with a view to obtaining eternal beatitude.

3.2.3.5 We know the value of what we offer to God

We can further appreciate that this is an economy when we consider that Thomas distinguishes charity from love by saying that "charity adds a certain perfection over and above love, in that what is loved is reckoned to be *magni pretii* (of great price/value)."[76] In charity God is loved and sought; but also, in charity we love our own selves because of our connection to God, namely, because of our

[72] ST II-II.85.3 cor.
[73] ST II-II.85.3 ad 1, citing Augustine *De Civitate Dei* 10.6. He cited the same quote at *Scriptum* 3.9.1.1.2 obj 1, and responded that "sacrifice" was being used metaphorically. He uses it again at ST III.48.3 cor, to argue that Christ's death was a sacrifice.
[74] ST II-II.85.3 ad 2.
[75] *Super De Trinitate* 2.3.2 cor.4. This argument is perhaps clearer for our purposes than the one in the *Summa*.
[76] ST I-II.26.3 cor.

sharing in the divine nature (incipiently by grace, to be completed in glory).[77] Therefore, in our acts of sacrifice to God, we both hope to obtain something of great value (the vision of God) and we give up something of value (ourselves, loved in charity).

Thomas hesitates to apply "charity" to love of self, as charity is friendship, and a friend is an other; but he then says that love of oneself is in a certain sense greater than friendship, indeed, is its form and root, because we cannot love neighbours as we love ourselves unless we love ourselves. This parallels the case with knowledge: we do not have knowledge of the first principles, but something greater, namely, understanding. However, this love of self can be called charity because it is founded in the charity with which we love God.[78]

3.2.3.6 God's hand is not forced

As we have noted, Thomas insists that it is God who has willed that we should be able to come to share the divine life in this way; any sense of *debitum* is only insofar as what God wants to happen ought to happen: if God is a "debtor" to anyone, it is not to us, but to God's own will and thus God's own self. This divine *ordo* is a structure of justice, a replacement for the gift of original justice which Adam lost. But it is a structure that mediates agency rather than obliterating it. Increase in grace and glory is an appropriate reward for charity, but it does not happen automatically. When it comes to rational (as opposed to irrational) creatures, God deals with them at the appropriate level, which is personal. God may make a general act of the will with regard to irrational creatures, but takes individual care

[77] ST II-II.26.3 cor, 26.4 cor.
[78] ST II-II.26.4 cor.

with rational ones: they have merited by an act of the will, and are rewarded by an act of God's will.[79] This is related to a distinction Thomas makes when discussing providence: a builder makes a specific decision how many rooms there will be in the house, but decides the number of bricks simply as the number needed for a house of those dimensions.[80] This fits in with Thomas' insistence that charity is a species of friendship, and that revelation of secrets is a sign of friendship - and as we have seen, knowledge of God is increased through intimate co-working with God, and this increase in knowledge is the basis for an increase in charity.[81]

3.2.3.6 Trinitarian aspects

This economy is based upon the operations of knowledge and love, for love comes from knowledge. We saw this already, in that an invisible mission of the Son is accompanied by an invisible mission of the Holy Spirit, for the Word is not any word, but the *Verbum spirans Amorem*. The charity by which we merit is a sharing in the Holy Spirit, given by grace. Sometimes Thomas seems to resile from these Trinitarian aspects. Christ's sonship comes from the Father alone, whereas ours is the work of the whole Trinity, with different aspects of it appropriated to different persons. But the point Thomas is making here is that our sonship is but a likeness, a participation in the sonship of the Son. Even as a mere likeness it is radically and ineradicably Trinitarian.[82]

[79] *Summa Contra Gentiles* 3.140.4.
[80] ST I.23.7 cor.
[81] *Super Ioannem* prologus (M11), 14.4 (M1916), 15.3 (M2016)
[82] ST III.23.2. An interesting light is shed on this when Thomas considers the possibility of an other Person becoming incarnate to save us through filiation, ST III.3.5 ad 2.

3.3 Alternative bases to morality: punishment and temporal goods

This economy is basically about spiritual goods (charity) being rewarded with even greater spiritual and eternal goods (glory). But there can be other motivations to act: fear of punishment, temporal goods, and obedience to the law. We must see how these fit into the economy, if at all.

3.3.1 Punishment

As well as rewards, punishment, according to its quality and quantity, can be deserved. We need to see if it forms an economy, and its relation to the economy of reward.[83]

3.3.3.1 Punishment and *ordo*

For Thomas God implants an order within nature so that nature achieves its own goals - which God has determined for it - due to processes internal to nature itself: secondary causes are real causes.[84] Thomas begins his treatment of punishment by noting that this order tends to preserve things, and thus if one thing attacks another, it is likely to suffer some harm from it or be weakened by it.[85] This tendency occurs in human beings as well. He then applies this principle to *ordo*: an *ordo* will defend itself against an attack upon it, acting more vehemently and subduing (*deprimere*) that which rose against it.[86]

[83] Garrigou-Lagrange notes that "in the abstract" the merit that brings eternal life and the demerit that deserves punishment are opposed, but apart from repeating Thomas' remark that merit comes from an integral cause and punishment from a defective cause, does not in that work follow the connection between the two. *Grace*, 366, 371.

[84] ST I.103.6, I.105.5 cor.

[85] ST I-II.87.1 cor.

[86] Stephanie Gregoire, as the title of her article suggests, tries to analyse Thomas' position on punishment in terms foreign to him by asking whether he is a retributivist ("backward-looking") or a utilitarian ("forward-looking") and misses the dynamic nature of an *ordo*. Because an *ordo* is teleological, to restore it is to look to the future. "Punishment: Aquinas and the Classical Debate," *Angelicum* 86 (2009): 375-398.

However, the nature of an *ordo* is such that by its own intrinsic processes it carries out the intentions that belong to its foundation (*principium*, or, if this is personal, its *princeps*). Hence Thomas says that "whatever rises up (*insurgit*) against some order will be put down (*deprimatur*) by that order or (*vel*) by the ruler (*princeps*) of that order."[87] As is indicated by Thomas' use of *vel* rather than *aut*, the action of the *ordo* and the action of the *princeps* are not two acts, but one.

Sin is a disordered act, and so it acts against an order, and there is a connection between order and glory. The existence of an order is an external manifestation of the founder of that order, a going out of self, in that the known is somehow present in the knower. Hence Thomas prefaces his remarks about order by saying that when all things "are contained under an order, they are in some way one in order to the source (*principium*) of that order." The purpose of punishment, therefore, is not simply to change the behaviour of the offender (which it might not do), but to strengthen the presence of the order (or the glory of the *princeps ordinis*) in all those who belong to that order, so that they either repent themselves or are strengthened in their resolve to persevere in the good.[88]

The sinner acts against not one order, but three: the interior order of one's own reason, the external order of the one who governs, and the divine order. Notice that human order is not abstract, but has its foundation in a concrete, personal governor (*gubernans*), temporal or spiritual, civil or domestic (*politice vel oeconomice*).[89] And so punishment is threefold: firstly, the remorse of conscience, brought on by the person himself, next human punishment, and then divine

[87] ST I-II.87.1 cor.
[88] ST I-II.87.2 ad 1; 87.3 ad 2.
[89] ST I-II.87.1 cor. Here we have one example of Thomas' restricted understanding of *oeconomia*.

punishment.[90] Divine punishment will be the focus here.

Since sin is a disordered act of the will, punishment consists in something that is against the will of the one punished. But this disorder of the will has two aspects - a turning from God, and a turning to finite, created goods - each of which is brought into order in a different way.[91]

3.3.3.2 Punishment as loss

We can consider turning away from God as merely the negative side of the economy of merit and reward. If the beatific vision is given to those who condignly merit it, then those who do not merit it, miss out on it, which is against their deepest will and so is a punishment. Indeed, as frustrating our deepest will it is the greatest punishment, and Thomas several times cites John Chrysostom to this effect.[92] Similarly, in this life mortal sin of its nature results in the withdrawal of grace.[93] The potentially or actually infinite duration of this punishment arises because of the potentially or actually infinite duration of the turning away.[94] Turning away from God, although a finite act, has a certain infinite quantity, as it is turning away from an infinite good, and the punishment is the loss of an infinite good.[95]

3.3.3.3 Punishment as inflicted

When sin is considered as turning towards finite goods, a different sort of punishment arises. In terms of the definitive punishment after death, there is the *poena sensus*, literally punishment of the senses, but Thomas holds that, particularly

[90] ST I-II.87.1 cor.
[91] ST I-II.87.4 cor.
[92] ST I-II.88.4 cor; *De Malo* 5.1 obj 3.
[93] ST I-II.85.5 cor, I-II.87.2 cor.
[94] ST I-II.87.3 cor.
[95] ST I-II.87.4 cor.

before the general resurrection, the term "senses" is to be taken metaphorically, as indicating that the punishment is not the spiritual punishment of the loss of the beatific vision. This punishment involves the separated soul being tied to an inferior material substance (fire), which causes the pain of indignity; or the soul and risen body suffering through a fire that cannot corrupt, only bring pain.[96] It is a suffering through the very thing which the person has wrongly chosen. Further, although the spiritual punishment is the same for all (as the same good is lost), the *poena sensus* can vary in intensity from one person to another, according to the intensity of their attachment to finite goods:[97] unbaptized infants, who have not voluntarily attached themselves to anything at all, experience no *poena sensus*, as will be explained below. This allows there to be some proportion or justice in punishments (as there is some proportion in the reward). It also helps the punishment to be a deterrent in the minds of those who think nothing of the spiritual life and therefore are not disturbed by the prospect of the loss of the beatific vision.[98]

For Thomas holds that punishment is first and foremost about the preserving of order, and only accidentally about pain. This is seen most clearly in his treatment of limbo. Unbaptized babies in limbo enjoy natural happiness, but not the beatific vision; Thomas insists, however, that since they have only ever lived at the natural level and have never had any inkling of anything beyond, although they are aware that they are made for happiness, they are totally unaware of the happiness of glory they are missing, and it is no source of anguish to them.[99] We can see the babies in limbo as deprived, and so as punished for their share in the guilt of Adam,

96 SCG 4.90.
97 ST I-II.87.4-5.
98 SCG 3.145, specifically directed against Algazeli.
99 *De Malo* 5.3, cor, ad 1. For a good treatment of this question, see Serge-Thomas Bonino, "La théorie des limbes et le mystère du surnaturel chez saint Thomas d'Aquin," *Revue Thomiste* 101.1-2 (2001): 131-166.

but they do not. Objectively they are punished, but subjectively they are unaware of it.[100] This distinction can be extended: we can see sinners who descend deeper and deeper into vice as moving further and further away from God, suffering greatly for their sins, but they may not see this and, at the time, may actually be enjoying themselves.[101] For obvious pastoral reasons, Thomas does not explicitly state the logical conclusion: there may well be souls in hell who, because of their minimal awareness of God before death, barely notice the loss of the beatific vision, and for whom the *poena sensus* is an annoyance rather than a torment, and who consequently have a minimal "worm of conscience." Such people may even be happier in hell than they were on earth: after all, God delights not in punishment but in justice;[102] and the punishment can serve no medicinal purpose, so there is no sense in God taking pains to inflict it. It is possible to reconcile hell and God's mercy.

3.3.3.4 Does God inflict punishment?

But this raises the question whether God actually inflicts any punishment, or whether, in accord with a possible reading of our original quote, it is simply the God-given order that re-asserts itself. The system would work perfectly without any

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[100] Lawrence Feingold uses Thomas' explanation of limbo to argue for the actual existence of *natura pura*. *The Natural Desire to See God According to St. Thomas Aquinas and his Interpreters* (Naples FA: Ave Maria University Press, 2010), 213-214, 247-250, 350-353, 367-369. Aaron Riches responds to this, "To Rest in the Infinite Altitude of the Divine Substance: A Lubacian response to the provocation of Lawrence Feingold and the resurgent attack on the legacy of *Surnaturel* (1946) – Part One,", *Synesis* 1 (2013). He relies in part on Bonino's argument that at *De Malo* 5.3 ad 1 Thomas makes it clear that there is only one beatitude: what differs is the intensity with which it is enjoyed: "La théorie des limbes," 158. Even Garrigou-Lagrange would disagree that limbo represents a real case of *natura pura*, for he holds that in classical Thomism "fallen man cannot be directly averted from his final supernatural end without at the same time being at least indirectly averted from God, his final natural end and the author of life," and hence that infants in limbo do not have "absolute, perfect natural happiness" but only " a certain natural beatitude." *Grace*, 504-505.

[101] For only in some cases does the descent into vice cause the repentance of the sinner, but it is always a warning to others: ST I-II.2 ad 1.

[102] SCG 3.144.10.

"intervention" on God's part. Even the *poena sensus* could be ascribed to a tragically but invincibly misguided will fixing the sinner to material things, even though this keeps it from God, its highest desire, and so it could be voluntary (so not imposed by God) and "against the will" (and so punishment) at the same time. Such a position is consistent with Thomas, but he does not state it.[103] For, as it was with reward, so it is with punishment: human beings are not irrational objects; their merits and sins are voluntary and personal, and God responds to them in an appropriate way.[104] Thomas seems to distinguish between the loss of grace that comes automatically (*effective*) through mortal sin, and the withdrawal of grace from the sinner by God as punishment (*meritorie*);[105] and yet at the same time declares that this is not due to a defect in God's grace, but to our decision to turn away.[106] God's reward or punishment flows straight from the divine will, and yet is not arbitrary, because entirely in keeping with the divine order of justice. This is why in the passage originally quoted from the *Summa*, that the "order or the ruler of the order" repress the disorder, should be interpreted not as two separate agents, but as both acting in total harmony, each in its own way.

What we have, then, is a single economy which provides a structure in which God can graciously interact with rational creatures and allow them meaningful action by which they can merit their share of the gift of the beatific vision. Punishment is the negative side of this economy. Under both aspects, the structure never takes over as a brute structure, but is always there to support the interpersonal

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[103] Given that the idea that we remain in hell and its torments by our own will may be incomprehensible to some sinners and so pastorally unhelpful, this is not surprising. He gets close to it, however, citing as authoritative Bernard's dictum "only one's own will burns (*sola propria voluntas ardet*)." *De Malo*, 5.2 sed contra 1.

[104] SCG 3.140.4

[105] ST II-II.24.10 cor

[106] *Super Ioannem* cap.12, lect. 7 (M1698); *De Malo* 3.1 ad 8.

exchange.

3.3.4 Material rewards

This economy is principally a spiritual economy: it is ordered upon the beatific vision (or the loss of it). And yet the *poena sensus* reminds us that it has a material aspect. This is not restricted to punishment. The acts of charity that merit reward are carried out in the body, and so it is not unjust but rather congruent that the body should share in the reward. The soul will be vivified and glorified, and the glory of the soul redounds to the body.[107]

As for temporal goods in this life, Thomas argues that the imperfection of the Old Law is that it works by threatening external punishments and offering temporal rewards, so that people's motivation for obeying the law is not love of virtue; consequently the Old Law does not make people truly virtuous, and thus fails as a law.[108] It is not surprising, therefore, that when he considers the issue in the last article on merit, the *sed contra* cites Ecclesiastes to remind us that temporal goods and ills happen equally to the just and the unjust.[109] And yet, while Thomas may be meaning to imply the vanity of temporal goods as such, he does not want the indifference with which they fall upon the just and the unjust to imply that God is indifferent to us, a doctrine that Thomas strongly opposes.[110] This *sed contra* is one of the very few in the *Summa* to which Thomas gives a response. Thomas sees the

[107] ST III.19.3 ad 3;

[108] ST I-II.107.1 ad 2. He argues similarly that if baptism conferred impassibility in this present life, people would approach it for the wrong reasons, ST III.69.3 cor.

[109] ST I-II114.10 sed contra. This article has occasioned very little interest from 20th century commentators. Garrigou-Lagrange devotes thirty-six pages to the question on merit, but a mere nine lines on the last page to this article. *Grace*, 363-398. Nor do we find a mention in Cornelius Ernst OP, "Merit" in Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, vol. 30 *The Gospel of Grace: Ia 2ae 106-114* , ed. Cornelius Ernst OP (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1972). There is not even any discussion of it in Wawrkyow, *God's Grace*.

[110] S*uper Iob*, prol.

justice of God working through temporal goods in three ways.

Since the ultimate reward is eternal life, anything that is given in response to our just actions which helps us towards eternal life may properly be considered as merited. This applies principally to an increase in grace or charity, as we have already seen, but sometimes material things may help, and these also are merited in the strict sense. However, there is a problem here, as this category could just as easily include "bad" material things as well as "good" ones.

Secondly, temporal goods considered solely in themselves can also be merited, but only *secundum quid*. When they come about through our own efforts, which, of course, are only possible by God and which only prosper under God, these goods "are in a sense pay" (*habent rationem mercedis*) according to God's dispensation, even if they are carried out by people who do not have the right intention.[111] This would seem to cover two scriptural examples raised as objections, where people's actions assisted God's plan for the Chosen People, even though their will was partially (the lying midwives) or wholly defective. Thomas' insistence that this is a derived sense reminds us that although the language of merit comes from the human world, its real sense is with regard to the spiritual and eternal good.

Thirdly, where Scripture talks of temporal goods as the reward itself, this use is ultimately figurative. That these material things were promised to the still carnal chosen people of the time as a reward for following the Law is literally true, but the overall purpose of this was as a figure of the spiritual rewards to come, "and not only their tongue, but even their life was prophetic."[112] This may also cover, for example, the reward to the lying midwives.[113]

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[111] ST I-II.114.10 cor.
[112] ST I-II.114.10 ad 1, citing Augustine *Contra Faustinum*, cap. 2.
[113] ST I-II.114.10 ad 2.

These different usages of "merit" cover bad things happening to good people and *vice versa*. Thomas points out that what is punishment to one may be medicine to another. Or, as the last theological statement of *Prima Secundae* says: "All things happen just as much to the good as to the bad, at least so far as the substance of temporal goods and ills is concerned. But not as regards the end, because the good are led through these things to beatitude, and the bad are not."[114] The good, because they know that their beatitude is spiritual, know that material goods are not their final end and that material evils are not a sign of punishment, and so they can deal in the light of God's love with all these things, which thus become helps to spiritual progress. The bad, who focus on the goods of this world as their end, see things differently, and will often wrongly think that they are being blessed or punished, leading to even more irrational behaviour - but sometimes a temporal evil will motivate them to repent of a moral evil, or a temporal good will encourage them in moral good, leading to some sort of conversion and repentance.

One could object here that it is completely random whether a bad person interprets (guesses?) rightly or wrongly the significance of a particular temporal good or evil. But just as God's justice works personally with an order that would seem to automatically punish and reward, and so God's acts of reward and punishment are seen to be totally voluntary and also totally just; so also God's mercy works with an order that seems intrinsically random, so that God's merciful act that reveals the true working of the economy is seen to be in no way irrational and yet totally gratuitous.

There is, then, one economy that, while primarily spiritual, also includes material goods, and while primarily about reward, also includes punishment. But this economy, as it does not flow automatically from the principles of our nature,

[114] ST I-II.114.10 ad 3.

needs to be received. Apart from its reception, human beings will live in some other sort of economy (otherwise their actions would be meaningless even to themselves), which will by default be based around created goods or false gods. For Thomas, God meets the people where they are, and uses law to subvert the carnal from within (to "evacuate" itself) and to lead to a spiritual economy. And this is why we must turn to the category of law, which Thomas in *Prima Secundae* does not see as opposed to grace, but rather finding its perfection in grace.

3.4 Economy and Law

Prima Secundae concludes with the two external helps to virtue: law and grace. Law is an analogous term. The primary referent for law is God, and while law, as it is not a personal term, cannot be attributed to any of the divine persons, it closely associated with Wisdom, which is appropriated by the Son.[115] Humans participate in law through reason (natural law) and revelation (divine law); the primary reason for the two modalities, as always in Thomas, is that we have an end beyond our natural means, although a secondary reason is the weakening and darkening of our rational powers due to sin.[116] There is also human law, consisting of particular attempts to apply the natural law to given communities.

3.4.1 Law as a structure

Thomas' treatment of law is probably the clearest example of an attempt by him to understand a structure. Law has both a universal existence in the mind of the legislator (divine or human) as well as an existence in each of the subjects of the

[115] ST I-II.93.1 cor.
[116] ST I-II.91.4 cor.

law who is regulated by it.[117] An irrational object can only be subject to law (or, more correctly, a likeness of law) directly from God, for the "law" exists in it as its natural inclination to achieve the common good as God's providence directs; a rational agent, having providence over himself or herself, participates in the eternal law by an impress of God's light on the mind, by which he or she discerns good from evil. [118] In a similar way divine law or human law can be impressed upon the rational mind through promulgation.[119] The virtuous person will obey the law because of an already existing inclination to virtue (although in the case of positive law, human or divine, this may simply be the virtue of obedience); those who have the foundations of virtue will obey simply by force of reason, this will either help form acquired virtues in them, or dispose them to infused virtues. And the fearful will obey to avoid punishment, which might cause virtue in them in the same way. Some, of course, will disobey. But for all people law will exist in their minds as a summons to obey, and the first virtue it will generate (if obeyed) is obedience to the higher authority that imposed the law. [120] But the ultimate factor that makes the law work in inducing change in people is fear of punishment.[121] In response to the objection that people can be incited to good by rewards as well as by punishment, Thomas replies that anybody can offer a reward, but only someone holding legal authority can punish.[122]

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[117] ST I-II.91.2 cor.
[118] ST I-II.91.2 cor and ad 3.
[119] ST I-II.90.4 cor and ad 1.
[120] Of course, if the higher authority imposes a bad law, obedience will generate a habitus directed to a bad end, a good *secundum quid*, such as being a good thief. ST I-II.92.1 cor, ad 1, ad 2.
[121] ST I-II.92.2 cor.
[122] ST I-II.92.2 ad 3.

3.4.2 Is the New Law more or less a law than the Old Law?

Under such a description of law, is the New Law more or less a law than the Old Law or a human code? In terms of the end of the law, to make the subjects good, it is obviously a better law, but does it better achieve the end of law by actually being something different from a law?

Although the Old Law and the New Law are geared towards the same end (beatitude), they are for different groups of people who are characterised by a different closeness to that end.[123] More specifically, the difference of the New Law is characterised by what is most powerful (*potissimum*) in it, namely the grace of the Holy Spirit which pours charity into the hearts of believers.[124] In the question on the New Law in itself, Thomas repeatedly says that the New Law is not written, but rather implanted on the heart, and that primarily it is the grace of the Holy Spirit, and only secondarily is it something written that tells us what to believe or do.[125] But as Thomas repeatedly distinguishes law and grace, we should not rush to identify them here. It is in the following question, on the relation between the New Law and the Old Law, that the way in which the New Law can be called grace becomes clear. The Old Law was made for those who were on the early stages of the journey to beatitude, the imperfect who were not yet in charity as they had not yet obtained spiritual grace.[126] Thus it was characterised by using fear of punishment and temporal rewards as motives, things external to the acts it commanded, and it could not aim directly at the state of mind, but only the external actions, and these external actions of themselves could not dispose to grace; the New Law is designed for those

[123] ST I-II.107.1 cor.
[124] ST I-II.106.1 cor.
[125] ST I-II.106.1 cor, 106.2 cor, ad 1, I-II.107.1 ad 3,
[126] ST I-II.107.1 cor. The phrase "spiritual grace" allows Thomas to talk of Israel as enjoying God's favour without necessarily having the gift of the Holy Spirit.

who have charity through the grace of the Holy Spirit, either to bring them to it, or to guide them in conserving it and growing in it.[127] As we have seen, of its nature charity places all its hope in God's promise of eternal beatitude, and so it does not need motivation from temporal rewards, or punishments that are external to the precepts of charity. If there is fear, it is not the servile fear that dreads temporal punishment, but the filial fear that dreads the loss of the grace of God or the forfeiting of eternal glory. [128] Like the Old Law, it has rituals, but these are capable of conferring the grace of the Holy Spirit and increasing charity.[129] Thus while the New Law has the same features as the Old Law, its difference is that these features come from and lead to charity given by the grace of the Holy Spirit, and so it can be said that the New Law is essentially grace rather than works, essentially something implanted rather than something written. Indeed, without the Holy Spirit, the letter even of the New Law will bring death.[130] Of course, Thomas admits that under the Old Law there were those who had charity, and under the New Law there are those who lack it, but it is more a question of the status of the group to whom the law is primarily directed.[131]

If punishment is a distinctive feature of law, then the New Law, where the punishment is the greatest possible, surpasses the Old. And yet the New Law does not work by fear of punishment, but by hope of reward. Its mode is one of freedom rather than violence. It does not regulate a carnal economy by restricting irrational desires, but it inspires good desires by mediating a spiritual economy. And that is where Thomas finds the superiority of the New Law, in that instead of merely

[127] ST I-II.107.1 ad 2.
[128] ST II-II.19.2 cor.
[129] ST I-II.108.1 cor, 108.2 obj 2 and ad 2.
[130] ST I-II.106.2 cor.
[131] ST I-II.107.1 ad 2 and ad 3.

inducing people to carry out good acts, it makes them good formally by inducing virtues, particularly charity.[132]

The other difference is the status of the parties. Law that worked on punishment required the subordination of the subject to the legislator, and indeed this is chiefly what the law brought about. An economy does not require the same subordination, and actually requires some sort of equality between the two parties. If the object of the law is simply to produce good behaviour, then law based on punishment will suffice. If the object is the communication of the goodness by which the lawgiver is good (in this case, divinisation), then a law based on intrinsic reward, an economy, is more desirable.

3.4.3 Moving from the Old Law to the New: satisfaction

Thomas sets up a distinction between punishment and merit. Punishment, as we have seen, is always experienced as against the will of the one who is punished, but for an act to be meritorious, it must be truly voluntary. One sort of act, however, falls somehow into both categories: satisfaction. An act of satisfaction is taken on voluntarily; this enables it to be meritorious. However, it is of the nature of an act of satisfaction that it is something that the person concerned would rather not do, and in that sense it is against the will *secundum quid*.[133] The strange workings of satisfaction will be explained gradually in greater detail as the thesis progresses, we shall just note here that Christ's passion can be understood both

[132] For this and similar reasons Mark Jordan warns against trying to understand Thomas on law by simply taking ST I-II.90-108 as a self-sufficient "treatise", without realising, at the very least, that they are integrally connected with the questions that follow on grace. See *Rewritten Theology*, 139. Similarly, Servais Pinckaers laments the modern separation that puts the treatise on law in moral theology and the one on grace in dogmatic. *The Sources of Christian Ethics*, tr Sr Mary Thomas Noble (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1995), 232.171.

[133] ST I-II.87.6 cor.

as punishment and as merit, and therefore it enables the person who believes in its satisfactory power to move from the Old Law, characterised by punishment, to the New Law, characterised by charity, the basis of merit.[134] But what we need to do next is to look at the grace that is central to the New Law, and we shall do so by way of an examination of the gift.

[134] This unstable nature of satisfaction has been noted by others, e.g. "there really is a sense in which the legal language of justification by faith "self-destructs": the point of the doctrine is to move us out of the legal domain into the world of family relationships, and it is just this point that so often gets lost in theological controversy over satisfaction, substitution, and imputation." Brian Albert Gerrish, *Grace and Gratitude: The Eucharistic Theology of John Calvin* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 60

CHAPTER FOUR

THE GIFT

In the previous chapter we showed that Thomas clearly sees the Christian life as an economy, for beatitude - the quest for which gives meaning to all human activity - is something that we earn. And while it was clearly appropriate that beatitude be given as the reward for love, it was still not entirely clear how the merit could be condign, that God in a real sense would *owe* us beatitude, even granted that this is only because of the order set up by God, so that God is primarily a "debtor" to himself.

This chapter will start by examining what "debt" means for Thomas, as it is a far from univocal term. With the help of Maxime Allard, we shall also see that different sorts of debts entail different sorts of subjects, and that in some cases debt is one of the constituents of the subject. We shall then consider the debt of gratitude which arises from the gift, to show that gift exchange provides a suitable way of understanding the economy of merit. Explicitly Thomas relies heavily on Seneca for his explanation of gift-exchange, but there are strong similarities with Marcel Mauss. An examination of these similarities helps to understand the connections between gifts and symbols, gift-exchange and violence, and gifts and social status and honour: Thomas also sheds light on the *hau* or "spirit of the gift" in Mauss. Finally, we can use these insights to come to a better understanding of satisfaction.

4.1 Debt

4.1.1 Legal and moral debt

Thomas explores the various meanings of debt when, after having considered justice in its strict (narrow) sense - the justice of transactions regulated by law, where what is rendered to the other is equal to what is owed (*debitum*) - he considers the "potential parts of justice" or the "virtues annexed to justice."[1] These virtues all have some notion of rendering to the other, but they depart from strict justice either because of an inability to render what is equal, or from a weaker sense of *debitum* or debt. Some debts simply cannot be repaid: first of all our debt to God (to which the virtue of religion responds), then to our parents or country (piety), and after that, to our superiors (observance). In other cases what is rendered can be equal to what is owed, but the debt is a moral debt rather than a legal one.[2] Sometimes the moral debt has the notion of necessity - one cannot preserve one's *honestas morum* without paying the debt - as in the case of gratitude and vindication. In other cases, the payment of the debt is necessary as contributing to greater *honestas*, as with the virtues of liberality and affability.

4.1.2 Moral debt

Maxime Allard has produced a study of Thomas' treatment of the virtue of religion which pays close attention to this "scene of the debt." He notes that it presents the legal debt of a commercial exchange as being "a particular case of a

[1] ST II-II.80 art. unicus.

[2] It is not entirely clear whether Thomas sees the debts of religion, piety and observance as being legal debts. In *Scriptum* 3.33.3.4.1 cor, religion and piety are said to involve a legal debt. This is not explicitly stated in the *Summa*; rather, legal debt is said to properly apply to "the justice which is the principal virtue" (ST II-II.80 unicus cor). But, of course, religion and piety are covered by the first four precepts of the Decalogue (ST II-II.122.1-5) and maybe Thomas means that in that sense they incur a "legal" debt. Further, Thomas gives a different distinction between moral and legal debt at ST I-II.99.5 cor.

larger economy" which "does not treat merely of the exchange of objects, but of individuals implicated in the exchanges," even to the point where one "exchanges oneself, renders oneself towards the other" but "without one party or the other being reduced to the state of an object of merchandise."[3]

Of the virtues annexed to justice, Allard is concerned chiefly with virtues mentioned earlier in the list, where the notion of debt is stronger. Seven things can be noted.

- This is not a contractual debt, freely entered into by pre-existing parties; thus, here the debt involves the very person; such a debt cannot be transferred, not does it cease to exist if the other party fails to meet the conditions.[4]

- In fact, particularly with religion and piety, the one liable to the debt does not exist prior to the debt: the very fact of coming into being is the source of the debt.[5]

- The debt is somehow "imposed": not by command, force, moral (ontological) constraint, nor even by liturgical habituation, but in a way intrinsic to the positioning of the ethical instance.[6]

- Particularly in the case of the debt of religion, the debt is of all that one is, and there is no way that it can be paid. However, debt is not to be equated with guilt. Allard notes that Thomas in no way mentions guilt, sin or a need for expiation as the source of the debt of religion, and Allard disapproves of the way that some people have argued from an unpayable debt to God to some sense of guilt in the presence of God even before one has had the chance to commit a sin.[7]

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3 Allard, *Que rendrai-je*, 247.
4 Allard, *Que rendrai-je*, 259-260.
5 Allard, *Que rendrai-je*, 260
6 Allard, *Que rendrai-je*, 97-98.
7 Allard, *Que rendrai-je*, 280-281, cites N Sarthou-Lajus, *L'Éthique de la dette* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1997), 28, 71; we find something similar in Jan Patočka, "Is

⅄ Particularly for religion, but to a reduced extent for piety and observance, the debt remains throughout time, not coming to an end.[8]

⅄ This sort of debt is positive and can be gladly assumed or acknowledged, and Allard cites Benveniste to suggest that this, rather than an owing due to a contractual borrowing, was the original meaning of *debeo* (= *de* + *habeo*).[9]

⅄ The debt is an impulse to action.[10]

4.1.3 Debt and the subject

Allard is not the first to realise that, although "St Thomas takes the human experience of justice as his point of departure, he transcends it in his concept of the virtue of religion."[11] The special significance of Allard's analysis is the way he relates it to subjectivity.

In line with many contemporary scholars, Allard raises various arguments - epistemic, metaphysical (and phenomenological) and ethical - that unsettle the Cartesian notion of the subject. We have already seen some of these when considering Chauvet.[12] In particular, he starts by looking at the tradition of Roman law, wherein "The *persona* is the crossroads of adventitious elements through which there is the intersection of a name, a family, a city, a history. The individual is

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Technological Civilisation Decadent, and Why?" in *Heretical Essays in the Philosophy of History*, tr. Erazim Kohák (Chicago: Open Court, 1996), 107. Even Chauvet slips it in as a way of explaining original sin, although he carefully arranges for the connection to be put into the mouth of a third party. See *Symbol and Sacrament*, 366-367.

8 Allard, 262.

9 Benveniste, *Indo-European Language and Society*, 148-149.

10 Allard, *Que rendrai-je*, 281-282.

11 Häring, *Sacraments*, 160.

12 Not all scholars of Thomas would agree. Emmanuel Perrier makes no reference to Allard, but he considers Chauvet's arguments for the social construction of the subject to be at odds with the teaching of Thomas. "Louis-Marie Chauvet, saint Thomas d'Aquin et le pain de vie," (paper given at a workshop on Chauvet, Dominican Convent, Toulouse, 15th October 2011, and to be published in *Revue Thomiste*), pp. 5-14.

not defined as an isolated being (*un être séparé*)."[13] The relation tends to go from the act to the agent. If the Roman subject, from the point of view of a modern (Cartesian) world, seems passive, this is simply a problem of the perspective.[14]

Allard is very wary of coming up with a substitute notion for the subject with which to approach the tract on religion. Rather, he proposes a heuristic device, the "instance éthique advenant en posture subjective." As if in order to prevent the reader from too readily forming a mental picture of what this might refer to, he explains how each term in the phrase has been chosen with multiple resonances in mind. The one word *instance*, for instance, carries the following connotations.

1. A positioning, a posturing, a holding of place among many possibilities - "ethical" adds to this the idea of responsibility, of answering to others.

2. A process, a trial in order to readjust the "sharing" entailed in the shared relations and beliefs so that it is fair, to achieve a stable set of relations to others - "ethical" adds the view with respect to beatitude, and also the concept of the author.

3. "Une valence thymique énoncée." (The word thymique recalls Plato's tripartite division of the human being into body, soul and θυμός, and probably is linked with what we referred to in Chapter Two as spirit. A few pages later Allard emphasizes that the role Thomas gives to the gifts of the Holy Spirit takes his moral theology beyond a mere obedience to rules or the imitation of a model.[15] The addition of *énoncée* would seem to add that this impulse is not sub-rational.) Allard connects this idea of *instance* as impulse with the idea of desires towards others.

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[13] Allard, *Que rendrai-je*, 52.

[14] Allard, *Que rendrai-je*, 53, with reference to Y.-P. Thomas, "Acte, Agent, Societé: Sur l'homme coupable dans la pensée juridique romaine," dans: *Archives de philosophie du droit*, 22 (1977), 63-83.

[15] Allard, *Que rendrai-je*, 87.

Moreover, the "instance éthique advenant en posture subjective" allows distancing from philosophies of "conscience de soi" and of the "moi;" it is more psychoanalytic, and it allows the tying together of a reflected desire of an *agir*; a passibility extending between sadness and joy; and a constellation of syncopes. This ties in with the second sense to allow for a process without a mastering.

Without going into all the details, this approach allows more scope for certain features of Thomas' theology, and particularly the virtue of religion.

First of all, the ethical must be seen, as Thomas sees it, in terms of the quest for beatitude. As beatitude is something unknown to us and beyond our powers, we cannot act as Cartesian subjects and consider it as an object; moreover, Thomas is clear that the internal sources of our ethical action are both deliberate acts of the will and the movements of the appetites, the emotions, that must be controlled by the will. This is where the need for the "thymic" impulse comes in. Indeed, the very ability of the instance to act ethically (towards beatitude) is something that grows in it, and which it approaches (hence *advenant*). Its very subjectivity is in the process of becoming, and yet this becoming is not something that develops from within like a plant from a seed (an image Allard rejects), but which comes from without.[16] In order to receive it one must adopt a posture (a word which reminds us of the bodily nature of the human being, as is made clear in Thomas' treatment of adoration), and to be subject to it (hence *subjective*). This subjectivity is not to be confused with the *posture assujettie*, which is not a centre of *dispositif actoriel* but is trying to imitate some exterior project, and so cuts off its growth. Nor is it to be confused with the *posture in-subjectivable*, which desires to test the *destinateur*, and

[16] Hence Thomas also talks of the exterior principles of our ethical action, law and grace, mediated to us by the institutions of the state and the Church. Allard, *Que rendrai-je*, 74-75.

so is blinded and disoriented. Both of these *postures* are actually *impostures*, as Allard will make clear when he examines the question on idolatry.

Consequently, there is a marked difference between the legal debt of strict justice and the moral or honorable debt associated with these virtues. The debt of strict justice is about things owed between two parties that are distinct from each other, whose relations are mediated by a third party (the law), and where the other relations between the parties are not taken into consideration, so that the parties to the contract could be changed. I can subcontract someone to do a job, but I cannot subcontract someone to pray or to love my mother. We could say that, for those virtues where the debt is real (at the very least religion, piety and observance) the very debt that impels the "ethical instance" to act is what constitutes him or her as an ethical instance, and it is in that action of giving that he or she receives (more fully) subjectivity. And this goes back to the idea that the *persona* is a crossroads, or perhaps, we could say, a node on a network of relations. The debt that both brings into being and binds is also a bond in the sense of relationship, and we know for Thomas that, in the pre-eminent case, persons are distinguished by relations of origin.

Religion, piety and observance all entail debts that can never adequately be returned; it is not from considering them that we shall discover the way in which God becomes a "debtor" to us. It is only when we get to gratitude that is becomes possible to repay the debt. And yet gratitude is the larger category of which the other three are special cases, as Thomas makes clear by asking in the second article, which deals with gratitude to God (and also gratitude to parents).[17] And so, leaving Allard

[17] II-II.106.2. Thus I. Mennessier, while acknowledging the powerful logic of Thomas' ordering of the potential parts of justice, says that we can also go the other way, to understand analogously our obligations towards that transcendent other who is God, and, we could add, God's

to examine religion, it is to gratitude that we now turn.

4.2 Gratitude and *gratia*

4.2.1 The multiple character of *gratia*

We can start with the title of question 106 of *Secunda Secundae*: "De gratia sive gratitudine." When discussing the theological concept of grace in *Prima Secundae*, Thomas has already explained the meaning of *gratia* as it applies in human affairs.[18] It can refer to the choice of one person to love another (*dilectio*) that makes the second person *gratus* to the first;[19] a gift given *gratis*; and the recompense for a benefit given *gratis*, as in the term *gratias agere*. Furthermore, the gift-giving proceeds (*procedit*) from the love, and the thanks proceeds (*procedit*) from the benefit. Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange holds that Thomas is pointing to an analogous use of the word *gratia*, but to Thomas' three meanings in the human realm, he seems to add a fourth and more primary one, the quality that makes us pleasing (e.g. "the grace of countenance").[20] We can avoid adding this extra meaning if we follow the approach provided by Godbout. Basing himself on the works of Benveniste, he notes that many words that relate in some way to exchange originally had an ambiguity, whereas "economic" or "market" usage has specified and narrowed the meaning; a word that applied to both giving and taking (and the very ambiguity of the original **do* to denote both "give" and "take" is an example that Godbout does not cite at this point) is restricted to the side of either giving or taking.[21] The examples given by

"obligations" towards us. "Renseignments techniques," Appendix II in Thomas Aquinas, *Somme Theologique: La Religion: 2ª-2æ, Questions 80-87*, tome premier, tr. I. Mennessier OP, Éditions de la Revue des jeunes (Paris: Desclée, 1932), 189-190.

18 ST I-II.110.1 cor.

19 Thomas specifically links *dilectio* with choice at ST I-II.26.3 cor.

20 Garrigou-Lagrange, *Grace*, 112-3, 114-115.

21 Jacques Godbout (in collaboration with Alain Caillé) *L'esprit du don*, new edition (Paris: La Découverte, 2000), 241-249, citing Émile Benveniste, *Vocabulaire des insitutions indo-*

Godbout are *reconnaissance*, *recevoir* and *hôte* (these two in connection with hospitality), *avoir confiance*, *je lui dois beaucoup*, *prêter*, *prix* and especially the Latin *gratia* which, as Benveniste points out, can apply to the party who receives with favour, or to the party who is received with favour.[22] If we follow this line, Thomas is looking at a reality whose proper dynamic is to have three phases, which, as we shall see, is in keeping with what he says about gratitude.

4.2.2 Thomas' debt to Seneca

We can understand Thomas' treatment of gratitude better when we consider his sources. Of the 50 citations of authorities in the ten articles of the two questions on gratitude and ingratitude, 24 are from Seneca's *De Beneficiis*, eleven from Aristotle, one from Cicero, nine from scripture, four from the fathers, and one from the lives of the saints.[23] Analysing more closely the way these authorities are used makes even clearer the reliance upon Seneca. Cicero, the great taxonomist of morals, is cited in the first *sed contra*, concerning whether gratitude is indeed a special virtue, and of the remaining nine, four have citations from scripture, three from Seneca, one from Aristotle, and one *sed contra* argues from reason alone.[24] On the other hand, at least five of the citations of Aristotle, two of the patristic quotes, and one of the scripture passages, are about more general moral or metaphysical

européennes, 2 vols., (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1969). The reference to **do* can be found at Émile Benveniste, *Indo-European Language and Society*, tr. Elizabeth Palmer (London: Faber and Faber, 1973), 66-70.

22 Benveniste, *Indo-European Language*, 159-162.

23 Let us recall that Thomas claimed that the Romans, not the Greeks or Jews, excelled in ethics. On the basis of remarks in Jerome's *De Viris Illustribus* 12, Seneca himself was commonly believed to have corresponded with St Paul, and a set of spurious letters circulated widely in the Middle Ages. In an article that tends to downplay the influence of Seneca (completely omitting any reference to Thomas' use of him), M. Spanneut points out that there are over 300 surviving copies of this alleged correspondence from the period 1200-1500. "Seneca, Lucius Annaeus," *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Seneca."

24 ST II-II 106.1 from Cicero, 106.2, 3; 107.1, 4 from scripture, 106.4 and 5 and 107.3 from Seneca, and 106.6 from Aristotle.

principles, whereas all the Seneca quotes are specifically about gratitude or ingratitude. Moreover, these citations from Seneca present the main outline of his teaching, and even when he is cited in an objection (106.4 obj 3; 107.1 obj 1, 2 and 3; 107.2 obj 3; 107.3 obj 3) his position is never denied or minimised, merely clarified, always in keeping with the general tenor of his thought, and sometimes even by reference to other places in his own writings (107.1 ad 2, 107.3 ad 3). Thus it is clear that for Thomas gratitude is a Christian virtue, and at the same time (although, as we shall see, he makes some modifications to Seneca's position) he fundamentally endorses Seneca's pre-Christian notion of gratitude. This rootedness in the pagan world will help us to bring Thomas' notion of the gift into dialogue with the findings of anthropology.[25]

This already gives us an insight into the threefold nature of *gratia*. Seneca begins *De Beneficiis* by considering the traditional image of the three Graces holding hands in a ring, and tells us that one represents giving the gift, another accepting the gift, and the third returning the gift.[26] If giving is listed first, nonetheless what is envisaged is an unending cycle that loses its beauty if

[25] Thomas' debt to Seneca has not been analyzed closely, and where it is mentioned, it is often downplayed. There is a brief treatment in Ceslao Pera OP, *Le fonti del pensiero di Tommasso d'Aquino nella Somma Theologica, con Presentazione di P. M. -D. Chenu O.P. e aggiornamento bibliografico di P. C. Vansteenkiste, O.P.* (Turin: Marietti, 1979), 74-75, which mentions one article on the topic, Martin Blais, "La colère selon Sénèque et selon saint Thomas," *Laval Théologique et Philosophique* 20.2 (1964), 247-290. Pera notes that although Thomas has severe criticisms of Stoicism's religious thought and moral theory (regarding the good or evil of the passions), Thomas treated him as an "authoritative moralist", freely citing him with regard to a number of the virtues (including gratitude); but in this Christian synthesis Stoicism "loses its latent pride and inhuman harshness." This, of course, overlooks the fact that Thomas himself recognised that the difference between him and the Stoics as regards the passion was one of terminology: Nicholas M Healy, *Thomas Aquinas, Theologian of the Christian Life* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 159, referring to ST II-II.123.10 cor. As another example, Leon Elders SVD merely notes that Thomas consults Seneca in dealing with gratitude, anger and clemency. "La méthode suivie par saint Thomas d'Aquin dans la composition de la Somme de théologie, III," *Nova et Vetera* (French) 66 (1991): 180. We might suspect that this downplaying is a defence of the supposed pure Aristotelianism of Thomas, but even Mark Jordan, who attacks such an approach, minimises Thomas' debt to Seneca, saying that it is mainly about how to control emotions. *Rewritten Theology*, 103.

[26] Seneca *De Beneficiis*, 1.3.2-5.

interrupted. Thomas, looking at the use of the word *gratia*, has replaced accepting the gift with the gift itself, but, as we shall see, keeps the idea of the unending cycle. And in the question the word *gratia* and its cognates slip back and forth among the three foci: the giver, the recipient, and the one making the return gift.

Thomas begins his discussion of gratitude by distinguishing it from other virtues on account of the different notion of debt at stake. He distinguishes not only the source of the debt - and in particular that it is owed for a "particular and private benefit" rather than the common benefit conferred by those of rank, and thus implicitly different from the debt of religion, piety and observance - but also the nature of the debt: it is not a legal debt, but a debt of honour that one pays of one's own accord (*sponte*).[27]

4.2.3 The gift object and the spirit of the gift

Fundamental to both the *beneficium* and to the gratitude it should inspire is that what matters is not the *effectus* or *donum* (the material benefit) but the *affectus*, *animus* or *voluntas* of the benefactor.[28] Thus although, absolutely speaking, God gives the greater gift to the one who remains innocent, there is greater *gratia*, because the gift is *magis gratis*, when he gives pardon to the penitent.[29] This also helps distinguish the debt of gratitude from the debt of religion, because in the latter the gift is that of created existence, a gift that is of its nature the same for all.[30] What

[27] ST II-II.106.1 cor and ad 2.
[28] ST II-II.106.5 cor.
[29] ST II-II.106.2 cor.
[30] Allard would hold that we thank parents for the gift of life through piety, and, by elimination, in religion we thank God for the gift of human nature. *Que rendrai-je* 275. I find the easier explanation for the distinction in Thomas' insistence that only God can create; creatures operate as secondary causes, which should be honoured (with the honour ultimately going back to God). Secondary causes do not assist God in creating, but in governing or steering the universe, and this is why one's country is owed piety as well as one's parents.

is at stake in *gratia* is God's choice to give to individuals, where the quantity of the gift need not be the same. We also note that *gratis* here has overtones of unexpected, in keeping with the insistence that the choice is made *sponte*.

The same distinction between *affectus* and *effectus* is used in the third article, where it is applied to the compensation. Thus even someone without means who does what he or she can is not *ingratus*.[31] Similarly, slaves who do more than their duty can confer a benefit on their masters, when it crosses over into *affectum amici*; and their deeds here are *gratiae habendae*.[32] This enables Thomas to insist that all people are obliged to gratitude, which he bases on Dionysius' dictum that every effect naturally comes back (*convertit*) to its cause: The benefactor as such is the cause of the beneficiary, and like a father, he operates as a principle or source (*habet rationem principii*).[33] What exactly the benefactor causes in the beneficiary will be discussed below.

The distinction between *affectus* and *donum* (or *effectus*) also applies to the time of *recompensatio*. Because the benefit consisted of both, the *affectus* should be returned immediately - as Seneca says, to receive kindly is to repay the benefit. But a suitable countergift should wait for the opportune time (and then be given without delay).[34] To pay too soon is to show oneself unwilling to be a debtor, and thus *ingratus*. This is different from legal debt, which must be paid before the appointed time, which is often at the very moment of the transaction. Here, however, as Thomas insists, it is a moral debt which depends *ex honestate debentis*.[35] Later we shall explore these notions of honour and willing debt with the help of anthropology.

[31] ST II-II.106.3 ad 5. Note here that the adverb *grate* describes both receiving of the benefit and the way the benefits come to us.
[32] ST II-II.106.3 ad 4.
[33] ST II-II.106.3 cor.
[34] ST II-II.106.4 cor and ad 3.
[35] ST II-II.106.4 cor and ad 1.

Much the same contrast occurs in the next article, where Thomas finally clarifies that in a legal debt (e.g. arising from a loan) or one arising from *amicitia utilis*, the repayment depends upon the quantity of what has been given, even if in the latter case it can be termed a *beneficium*. But in the case of *amicitia honesti* or of *gratia* one considers the choice (*electio*) or *affectus* of the giver, especially as *gratia* considers the benefit insofar as it is made *gratis*.[36]

4.2.4 Welcoming debt

Finally, the need to repay both the *effectus* and the *affectus* leads to an aporia. The benefit is commendable because it was given *gratis* and *honestas* generates an obligation to give back *gratis*. Merely to return a gift of equal size would be to acknowledge only the *effectus*, so one should try to give back something greater.[37] But this would lead to an unbounded spiral of repayment, which would not observe the mean of virtue or the nature of the good. But the debt of gratitude arises from charity, "quae quanto plus solvitur, tanto magis debetur." It is not inappropriate for charity to increase without bound.[38] Perhaps Thomas' wish to place gratitude at the service of charity is the reason he does not take up the illustration Seneca borrows from Chrysippus to describe this spiral of gift-exchange.[39] Giving benefits is like throwing a ball to an inexperienced player. At first it is done gently, so that he can easily catch and return, but as his skill improves, "we shall be bolder in throwing the ball, for no matter how it comes, his ready and quick hand will promptly drive

[36] ST II-II.106.5 cor.
[37] ST II-II.106.6 cor.
[38] ST II-II.106 obj 2, 3 and ad 2. This outmanœuvring of Aristotle is noted by Vivian Boland, "An Education in Gratitude," *Religious Life Review* 51, no. 275 (July/August 2012): 221-222. This is part of the larger pattern of the theological subversion of the Aristotelian idea of virtue described by Mark Jordan: see 1.1.3.
[39] Seneca *De Beneficiis* 2.17.3-5.

it."[40] This image depicts the "rally" of benefits as potentially unlimited, and also - in a non-competitive way - as ludic, and thus outside the rational without being irrational.[41]

This connection with charity is taken up in the question on ingratitude. It would seem reasonable (and even scriptural) to want to avoid debt, but the "debt of gratitude is derived from the debt of love, from which no-one should (*debet*) want to be absolved. Whence, that someone should owe this debt unwillingly seems to arise from a defect of love towards the one who gave the benefit," and so ingratitude is a sin.[42]

Describing the degrees of ingratitude gives Thomas the occasion to consider the duties of gratitude: to acknowledge the benefit received; to give praise and thanks; and to repay (as and when appropriate).[43]

In the article on whether ingratitude is a mortal sin, the words *gratus* and *gratitudo* become virtually synonymous with "(being in) a state of grace." *Ingratitudo* as a mortal sin becomes the absence of grace. *Ingratitudo* as a venial sin does not have the full sense (*perfecta ratio*) of ingratitude: it does not take away the habit of charity, but excludes some of its acts: it is not contrary to it, but outside it.[44]

Finally, in line with the Lucan text "the Most High is kind to the *ingratos*

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40 Seneca *De Beneficiis*, vol. 3 of *Moral Essays*, ed. and tr. John W Basore, Loeb Classical Library (London: William Heinemann, 1935), 2.17.4.

41 Josef Pieper notices a ludic strand connected with the gift in Thomas, who, he says, considers rational activity as work, and intellectual activity (contemplation) as the reception of a gift. "The highest form of knowledge comes to man like a gift - the sudden illumination, a stroke of genius, true contemplation; it comes effortlessly and without trouble. On one occasion St. Thomas speaks of contemplation and play in the same breath: 'because of the leisure that goes with contemplation' the divine wisdom itself, Holy Scripture says, is 'always at play, playing throughout the whole world,' (Proverbs viii, 30f)." *Leisure the Basis of Culture*, tr. Alexander Dru (London: Faber and Faber, 1952), 35-36, 40, citing *Scriptum* 1.2.1.5 expositio textus. The text continues to point out that, like play, divine contemplation has no end but itself.

42 ST II-II.107.1 ad 3.

43 ST II-II.107.2 cor.

44 ST II-II.107.3 ad 1 and ad 2.

and the wicked," Thomas argues that it is the duty of the benefactor "de ingrato gratum faciat" by giving a further *beneficium*.[45] The similarity to the technical term "gratia gratum faciens" is highly suggestive.

Thomas bases almost all the points he makes upon Seneca. But the point where he differs leaves us with an important question: what does the benefactor cause in the beneficiary? It is quite clearly not that thing which Thomas elsewhere refers to as the *effectus* of the beneficium, because, as for Seneca, gratitude responds to the *affectus* much more than the *effectus*. Seneca gives a very clear example: if a doctor saves someone's life by a routine procedure and without showing any special concern for the patient, then the standard payment for the doctor's skilled labour will suffice.[46]

To answer this question it helps to know what to look for; Allard has already given us some clues, but the study of the gift made by Marcel Mauss - and developed by the likes of Alan Caillé and Jacques Godbout - will be very valuable.

4.3 Maussian gift-exchange

A few pages into *The Gift* Marcel Mauss introduces, like Seneca, the triple obligation to give, to receive, and to give in return.[47] Seneca and, therefore, Thomas are working with a notion of gratitude that has strong affinities with that found in Mauss' "archaic" societies, but the changed social context entails some differences too.

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45 ST II-II.107.4 *sed contra* and corpus.

46 Seneca, *De Beneficiis* 6.16.1-5.

47 Mauss, *The Gift*, 10-11. For his failure to refer to Seneca, see Alain Caillé, *Anthropologie du don: le tiers paradigme* (Paris: La Découverte, 2007), 88n 7.

4.3.1 The basics of Mauss' theory

Mauss notes that in archaic societies there is a form of exchange characterised by the gift. This often co-exists with what we could call commercial exchange, either by barter or through money, but is quite distinct from it.[48]

For Mauss gift is not characterised by what we would call "pure gratuity:" One of the major points of *The Gift* is that very often there is an obligation to give, to receive or (especially) to repay the gift.[49] But he is adamant that gift-exchange is not cleverly - or clumsily - disguised commerce.[50] In commercial exchanges the decision depends entirely on the two contracting parties, and the objects exchanged are inert objects. In gift-exchange the objects exchanged act upon the parties, establishing or strengthening the bonds between them. Also unlike commercial exchange, the giver never completely relinquishes the gift.[51] Along with the object given there is some spirit (*mana* or *hau*) which leads the giving to return to the original giver, often through a third party.[52] There is also normally a delay between the gift and the countergift.[53]

The obligation to repay the gift at least as well as it was given is very strong. Failure to do so will lead to loss of face or social status, to social death.[54] This obligation can become the engine of agonistic gift-exchange, where the purpose is to place the other party in a state of debt that they cannot repay. The paradigmatic

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48 For instance, he notes that the Trobriand Islanders distinguish between the *kula* trade and "the straightforward exchange of useful goods known as the *gimwali*." It is not the objects as such that distinguish the two, but the manner of the giving and receiving: "It is said of the individual who does not behave in his *kula* with the proper magnanimity that he is conducting it 'as a *gimwali*'." Mauss, *The Gift*, 20.

49 There is a section entitled, "The Three Obligations: Giving, Receiving, Repaying," Mauss, *The Gift*, 37-41.

50 Mauss, *The Gift*, 74-75.

51 Mauss, *The Gift*, 22, 62, 65.

52 Mauss, *The Gift*, 8-10.

53 Mauss, *The Gift*, 34. A quick return is remarkable, ibid., 28.

54 Mauss, *The Gift*, 38-41, and p. 101, n. 119.

case of this is the potlatch of the tribes of the Canadian Pacific coast, which can involve the destruction of large amounts of valuables in an attempt to outdo one's rivals.[55]

Mauss refers to "societies of total prestation" in which gift-exchange is not confined to a few areas of life, but where just about anything anybody has is actually a gift to them from someone else, a society in which each person is in debt to a wide range of other people, continually obliged to return countergifts, so that these have become the structuring principle of this society.[56] Light is shed on this process by the observation of Alain Caillé that gifts ought to be considered as symbols, and equally symbols ought to be envisaged as gifts.[57]

4.3.2 Gifts and symbols

Caillé holds that Mauss went beyond Émile Durkheim with his social facts and the idea that society cannot exist without symbols. For Mauss did not hold that symbols represent the pre-existing structures of society, as though the social structures and their representations were two distinct levels of reality (with the former tacitly assumed to be more real), but rather that "social facts are intrinsically symbolic."[58] This parallels Mauss' innovation of the *total* social fact: nothing in a society, even something purely natural, exists without being in relation to all the rest of the society, and that relation is mediated by symbols.[59] Without symbols we can neither share nor communicate (*communier et communiquer*), and the two are just

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55 Mauss, *The Gift*, 33-37

56 Mauss, *The Gift*, 6-8, 45.

57 Caillé, *Anthropologie du don*, 184.

58 Caille, *Anthropologie du don*, 193 citing Camille Tarot, "De fait total de Durkheim au fait total social de Mauss: un changement de paradigme?", *La Revue du MAUSS semestrielle* n° 8 (1996), 2e semestre, p. 71. My translation.

59 Caillé, *Anthropologie du don*, 193-194.

about the same.[60] The symbols that connect the objects within society to people are arbitrary, but they are universally accepted (in that society) and so have a certain objectivity. "Durkheim and we believe that we have proved that there is no symbol except if there is communion, and that the fact of communion creates a link which can give the illusion of the real, but which is already of the real."[61] Caillé interprets this to mean that there is no symbol except of something that is given and shared, and approvingly cites Camille Tarot: "The Maussian symbol of the symbol is not the word or the phoneme; it is the gift. And the Maussian gift can certainly not be reduced to the pure and sterilised exchange, disincarnated and transcendental, of Lévi-Straussian structuralism."[62] The gift here is envisaged as primitive money, like the types used for bridewealth or *wergeld*, which were not universal currency, but each type was suitable only for certain specific transactions, transactions which occupied "a semantic space marked out by the opposition between life and death, between alliance and conflict."[63] Our modern abstracted and universalised currency and the transactions it enables ultimately find their basis in these more primitive exchanges; there has arisen a world of autoreferential signs (that refer to each other) rather than heteroreferential symbols (that refer to things).[64] Caillé distinguishes between gifts that create or renew an *alliance*, the gifts of institution (*dons d'institution*) and gifts that are exchanged within an existing alliance (*dons institués*), the former being more fully symbols than the latter.[65] Symbols always have an

[60] Caillé, *Anthropologie du don*, 193.

[61] Marcel Mauss, "Catégories collectives et catégories pures" in *Œuvres* vol. II (Paris: Minuit, 1969), 151.

[62] Caille, *Anthropologie du don*, 196, citing Camille Tarot, «De fait total de Durkheim au fait total social de Mauss: un changement de paradigme?», *La Revue du MAUSS semestrielle* n° 8 (1996), 2e semestre, p. 86. My translation.

[63] Caille, *Anthropologie du don*, 197; Helen Codere, "Money-Exchange Systems and a Theory of Money," *Man* (New series) 3.4 (December 1968): 565.

[64] Caille, *Anthropologie du don*, 197-199.

[65] Caille, *Anthropologie du don*, 200. I shall often use the French *alliance*, which can also mean a covenant.

arbitrariness, because they are based on alliances made by the human will, made through a gift which is gift precisely because it did not need to be given, and on this basis rests all friendship, subjectivity and culture. "The symbol is to the sign as the link is to the good [exchanged] (*le lien au bien*), the alliance to separation, subjectivity to objectivity and arbitrariness overcome (*l'arbitraire surmonté*) to necessity."[66] There is a constant pressure to find freedom by detaching the symbols from the specific interpersonal relations on which they rest, which can be linked to the quest for modernity;[67] and even though Caillé thinks that religious symbols have in a certain way always been set free, still, he holds, these are deployed in a space that is woven through and through with symbolic relations between people.[68] Symbols, referring to something that is given, have a sense in a way that signs do not: signs are capable only of being subject to calculation and manipulation. Lévi-Straussian and Lacanian analysis of symbols, in trying to reduce their operations to calculated exchange, is in danger of reducing symbols to signs and losing all sense.[69]

This analysis of symbols, however, should not be read as a reductive sociologism: the meanings we construct and then reconstruct within the space the symbols provide (communally or privately) is not a pure construct (except that psychopathologies verge in that direction), for the symbols are based on relations between concrete persons, mediated by concrete things.[70] Similarly, although the symbolic world sets the stage and gives us roles to play, this is not symbolic interactionism or Parsonian functionalism. The roles are not so rigidly predetermined, but rather there is some "play" in the "play", precisely because the

[66] Caille, *Anthropologie du don*, 201. My translation.
[67] Robert A Nisbet, *The Quest for Community: a study in the ethics of order and freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 104 et seqq.
[68] Caille, *Anthropologie du don*, 202.
[69] Caille, *Anthropologie du don*, 209-210.
[70] Caille, *Anthropologie du don*, 210-213.

giving of the initial gift is always a gamble and hence a game.[71]

These links and alliances build up society, which Mauss defines as, "a group of people permanent enough and large enough to gather a sufficiently large number of sub-groups and living generations - ordinarily - on a determined territory, . . . around a (generally) independent and always determined constitution." Caillé notes the echoes of Aristotle, and we could also say Aquinas.[72] Elsewhere Mauss insists that only the invisible links established by gifts can allow a society based on *caritas*, rather than on fear, which can only make weak links: this is also a characteristic Thomistic theme.[73]

4.3.3 Gifts and Warre

"We marry the people we fight," as the Enga tribesmen would say to Mervyn Meggitt.[74] Bearing in mind that an Enga marriage is a very significant occasion of gift exchange (the bride herself, pigs, and these days even some western consumer goods), this classic quote from the annals of anthropology should warn us against romanticising "archaic" societies based on gift-exchange. Violence was exchanged as well, and is repeatedly present in the background in Mauss' *Essai*.[75]

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[71] Caille, *Anthropologie du don*, 213-215. This is an attempt to translate the "play" on words in the French: "le monde symbolique est un monde où l'on joue les rôles - *all the world is a stage*, assurément - mais il ajoutera que on ne peut les jouer que pour autant qu'on joue à les jouer."

[72] Mauss, *Fragment d'une sociologie descriptive*, in *Œuvres*, vol. III, p.307, cited by Caillé, *Anthropologie du don*, 217. My translation. Thomas cites Aristotle's *Politics* I to the effect that only the *civitas*, which is composed of households, each composed of many people, is a perfect community, whose regulations are truly law. ST I-II.90.3 ad 3.

[73] Caillé, *Anthropologie du don*, 217-218, citing "Appréciation sociologique du bolchevisme," *Revue de métaphysique et de morale* 31 (1924), 107.

[74] Mervyn J Meggitt, "Male-Female Relationships in the Highlands of Australian New Guinea" *American Anthropologist* New Series 66.4 (1963): 218. The Enga, the largest of the Highland tribes of Papua New Guinea, still have something of a reputation marrying (polygamously) and - despite the brief respite under the *kiap* during which Meggitt made his observations - for tribal fights. See Douglas Young, *Our Land is Green and Black: Conflict Resolution in Enga*, Point Series no. 28 (Goroka: Melanesian Institute, 2004)).

[75] Mauss is focussed on the gift, not on warfare, and one can gain a one-sided impression from his book. But the allusions to violence are there - see Mauss, *The Gift*, 3, 11, 31, 35, nn. 118 and 122 (on pp. 101 and 102), 38 nn, 143 and 144 (on p. 105), 61, 77 - and they become very explicit in

If gifts and violence seem opposed to us, we should remember that opposites belong to the same genus.[76] In this case it is the genus of things given *gratis*, and both the Latin *gratis* and the Greek δωρεάν it translates can mean "meaningless" or "pointless," and today we still talk of gratuitous violence and gratuitous insults.[77] A group or an individual can maintain or increase its honour by responding to the gratuitous (gift or violence) in its gratuity, although the relative priority of violence and gifts, and of gifts among themselves (e.g. women rather than non-human gifts) varies from society to society.[78]

Thus we can see the limitations of Marshall Sahlins' comparison of Mauss with Thomas Hobbes. Both Mauss and Hobbes, argues Sahlins, are interested in the alternative which humanity devises against "Warre." Sahlins uses the archaic spelling favoured by Hobbes to remind us that what is meant is not an event but a form of social organization, one where the way that groups carried on dealings with each other was through violence.[79] That the overcoming of Warre was a major concern of Hobbes is well-known, as is his solution, the development of a state with a monopoly on violence; Sahlins also provides quotes from *The Gift* to show that this was the concern of Mauss, for instance, that he defines "total prestation" as those exchanges, "undertaken in seemingly voluntary guise . . . but in essence strictly

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the concluding four pages, 79-81.

Milbank also holds that, in relation to Christian *agape*, "'local' gift-economy societies . . . should be regarded as possessing a merely 'advent' character," and "The inherent violence of such a system reveals itself in the painful markings of tribal identity upon human bodies, and the ungovernable war between one symbolic system and another." "Can a Gift be Given?" 144, 145. But neither here nor in his later as yet unpublished essays on the gift does he directly link violence and gift-exchange.

[76] E g., ST I.79.12 obj 2, ST I.100.1 cor, ST I-II.88.3 ad 1, II-II.4.3 arg 1,

[77] See Galatians 2:21 in the Greek and in the Vulgate. Thomas, in commenting on this text, equates *gratis* with *sine causa*, *frustra*, *superflue, in vacuum*, (*Ad Galatas*, cap. 2, lect. 6 M112) and, at another place, as *sine utilitate*, (*Ad Philippienses*, cap. 3, lect., 3 M140)

[78] Jamous, "From the death of men," , 168, 171.

[79] Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics*, (London: Tavistock, 1974), 171-173.

obligatory, on pain of public or private warfare."[80] In other words, gift exchange is the archaic attempt to achieve what the modern world attempts to achieve through the state. There is some truth to this, in that we moderns constantly turn to the state, or a superstate, to deal with violence, whereas, in Enga Province it is sometimes claimed that tribal fighting would ease if they could properly re-instate the *tee*.[81] But the continued existence of violence in both the modern state (or between modern states) and in tribal society shows that the total elimination of violence was never the goal.[82] It is the maintenance and enhancement of honour that matters, and in this game, as is supremely manifested by the potlatch, gift-exchange is simply war carried on by other means.[83] Like the gift, violence in such a society is a symbolic activity, normally about relative honour with regard to one's opponent, about settling scores so as to remain on top.[84] Violence must be somehow restrained, not only to avoid one's own side being totally wiped out, but also to avoid the elimination of the enemy, the one in whose face one has honour.[85]

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[80] *The Gift*, 1966, p. 151, cited by Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics*, p. 174. (In the 1967 edition this is on p. 3)

[81] The *tee* is a highly complex ritual of interwoven gift exchange between clans. Its claimed power to solve tribal fights is reported byYoung, *Our Land* , 34-37, 141-142, 255.

[82] William T Cavanaugh notes that Augustine had commented that the state looks for enemies to fight without in order to achieve unity and suppression of discord within. (*City of God* 5.12 and 1.30) The modern state often manufactures an enemy within in order to justify its existence. *Torture and Eucharist: Theology, Politics and the Body of Christ* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 9-10; 32-33.

[83] Cf Young, *Our Land*, 142.

[84] In *tok pisin* the term "tribal fight" has become "trabel pait", a fight about a *trabel* (trouble) or grievance, reflecting the way the participants themselves perceive what is going on**.** Young, *Our Land*, 47. Moreover, the tally of the number killed on each side is the main measure of who is winning, although the relative status of those killed also matters. Young, *Our Land*, 159.

[85] Jamous, "From the death," 171-173. One is reminded of Hegel's example of the bondsman and the master. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Phenomenology of the Spirit*, tr. A.V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), para. 190-196, pp. 115-119.

Thus most social norms have no place for unlimited accumulation of power or wealth. However, the unceasing striving after merit before the infinite God does make sense in the Christian tradition. This may be the key as to why, as Weber observes, when the Refomation detached this impulse (originally monastic, but increasingly secular as well) from merit by good works before God, the result was a culture of unremitting material work and productivity. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic*, 73-74.

4.3.4 What Mauss brings to light in Thomas

The lengthy discussion of Maussian gift-exchange was necessary for two reasons. First of all, it helps to place what Thomas has to say on gratitude and the gift in the wider academic discussion of the topic. Secondly, as pre-moderns Thomas and his intended readership understood the gift more in Maussian terms than contemporary westerners do. Thomas could presume things from his 13th century readers that cannot be presumed from 21st century ones, and a study of Mauss can help to identify some of those presumptions. I shall look at two aspects of Maussian thought relevant to our study, the relationships between gifts and symbols and between gifts and violence, before taking up the question of what the benefactor causes in the beneficiary, which will give the opportunity to consider the link Mauss sees between gifts, relationships and social status.

4.3.4.1 The need to interpret gifts

This parallel between gifts and symbols recalls the parallel we saw earlier between words and sacraments, and it gives insight into literal and spiritual interpretations.

We can begin by noting that symbols and gifts both work through a certain arbitrariness: what makes a gift a gift (especially a *don d'institution*) is that it does not have to be given; and symbols have of their nature a certain arbitrariness to function, as Thomas notes.[86] The arbitrariness of the symbol is not quite as total as that of the linguistic sign, as Ferdinand de Saussure notes, and so Thomas is right to consider the *convenientia* of (sacramental) symbols.[87] As symbols, gifts require

[86] III.60.5 ad 1

[87] Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, tr. Wade Buskin (London: Peter Owen, 1960), 67-70; ST III.66.3, 5; 72.2, 4; 74.1, 3-6; 78.2-3.

interpretation, and the interpretation is both given and open. Thomas holds that we need to interpret the gift to see the spirit of the gift behind it, and it is in accordance with this interpretation that we either treat the object as merely an object, and repay equally, or treat it as a gift and repay in excess - in other words, the interpretation lets the gift open into an unending cycle, and each additional gift has something arbitrary, gratuitous or ludic about it.[88] There is a literal sense, and if we stay with the literal sense we are stuck at the level of commercial exchange, where a specific return is demanded by strict justice. But if we can perceive the spiritual sense, the return takes on an element of play or of grace. Nature is determined to one thing, says Thomas, but *gratia* opens on to the infinite.[89]

4.3.4.2 History and the splitting of *gratia* and *vindicta*

The existence of a strong state is probably the major difference between the society that fostered the thought of Seneca (directly) and Thomas (perhaps partly by legacy). Thomas is aware of the difference between his thought-world and that of archaic societies, and he refers to various aspects of the difference when reflecting upon the historical development of social structures and its theological significance.

Immediately after the fall there was no need of law, as the knowledge of the natural law through reason had not yet been darkened by the "custom of sin," and the social organization was still basically domestic. Written law comes on the scene with the formation of the larger social unit, the *populus*, and implicit in it is the recognition that some external help is needed both for the good to be instructed and helped to attain what they aim for, and for the wicked to be restrained and "tamed."

[88] ST II-II.106.5 ad 3.

[89] According to the *Index Thomisticus*, "Natura determinatur ad unum" or its equivalent is found at least 30 times in Thomas' works, e.g. ST I.41.6 cor.

God revealed a law to the chosen people, whose ceremonial precepts in a special way prepared for the coming Messiah, but whose moral precepts not only showed the way but also pointed out the weakness of human reason obscured by sin.[90] But as the moral precepts were in keeping with the natural law, they could be discovered by other peoples as well, although not with the same clarity as among the Jews.[91] Thomas notes that among the pagans the pre-eminent development of law was achieved by the Romans, although this was waiting "to be taken captive and rendered obedient to Christ."[92]

Essential to a law is that it restricts the right to violence, and especially the right to kill and hence to wage war, to the state.[93] Both Seneca and Thomas are working in a strong state, and one in which there is at least a degree of specialisation in that not all engage in military activity, in a way that differs even from Aristotle.[94] This results in a marked asymmetry with regard to the two virtues associated with repaying our peers - *gratia* (to respond to the good one receives) and *vindicta* (to respond to evil).[95] The strong state has separated the virtue of commutative justice according to which a magistrate must arbitrate, and the virtue of *vindicta* according to which a private person responds to evil, thus allowing *gratia* (where the division between legal and moral debt lies along different lines) to eclipse *vindicta*.[96]

And this is the point where Thomas can take *gratia* "captive and render it

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90 ST I-II.98.6.

91 ST I-II.94.5 ad 1, I-II.95.1-2, I-II.98.5 cor.

92 *Super Ioannem* 19.4 (M2422), citing 2 Cor 10:5.

93 ST I-II.92.2 ad 3, II-II.40.1 cor, ad 1, II-II.64.3 cor, ad 3, 64.5 cor, ad 2, 65.1 cor, 2 cor, ad 3.

94 Thus Aristotle makes the courage in war of the citizen (not of the mercenary) the first virtue (*Nicomachean Ethics* 3.8, 1116b 5-24). Thomas treats the cardinal virtues of prudence and justice before fortitude, and retains Aristotle's focus on war only by an extraordinary extension of the meaning of the word. ST II-II.123.5 cor. We might recall Jordan's remarks about Thomas' subversion of Aristotelian ethics at 1.1.3.

95 ST II-II.80 unicus cor; II-II.106 and 108.

96 ST III.108.2 ad 1. For Seneca, it is folly to try to make gratitude legally enforceable. *De Beneficiis* 3.6-17.

obedient to Christ."[97] Thomas' faith leads him to a marked asymmetry between evil and good: evil is not something positive, but the privation of the good, and we should pay more attention to good than to evil.[98] For Thomas, neither a truly charitable act nor an evil act is circumscribed by reason, but differently in each case: the evil act is not reasonable by way of defect; the charitable act, insofar as it is prompted by the gifts of the Holy Spirit, is not reasonable by way of superabundance.[99] Thus the spiral of gratitude should escalate indefinitely, but the cycle of evil should be brought to an end, and punishment should be adapted or even omitted if it will bring greater evil.[100] The purpose of punishment is, after all, to bring what is defective back into a reasonable and even a charitable order.

Although the difference between *gratia* and *vindicta* has been established, we need to remember their common roots, for this commonality enables the switch from a cycle of punishment and fear to a cycle of gratitude and love through the process of satisfaction, as we shall see below. A fuller understanding of satisfaction will arise when we have investigated the connection between gifts, honour and glory, which will come as we try to understand the spirit of the gift.

4.4 What the benefactor causes in the beneficiary

We are now in a position to answer the question of what the benefactor causes in the beneficiary. The answer is complex, and I want to consider it under three aspects: debt, gratuity and status.

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[97] It was *conveniens* that Christ, who came to be ruler of the world and bring peace, came at a time when the world was at peace and under one ruler. ST III.35.8 ad 1.

[98] ST II-II.106.3 ad 2.

[99] For the gifts are a disposition to be moved by something higher than reason, ST I-II.69.1 cor. One example Thomas gives of this is that the gift of piety may lead a ruler to spare from execution a criminal who has repented and had all his sins atoned for in baptism. ST III.69.2 ad 3.

[100] ST II-II.108.1 ad 5.

4.4.1 Debt

We started looking at gratitude within the "scene of the debt," and so at one level it is obvious that the benefactor causes debt. The task is to see why this should be a positive thing, for, as Jacques Godbout observes, "Modern liberty is essentially *the absence of debt*."[101] Here Allard's observations on debt and identity are useful, and we shall take them up below. Debt, of course, implies an imperative, and we have seen earlier that imperatives can be seen as oppressive when they seem to be imposed from without: even the letter of the New Law can kill. And so we need some parallel to the gift of understanding. Gifts are symbols, and they need to be read in a way that the imperative is the yearning to become what you are called to be, what the gift gives you the hope and desire to be.

4.4.2 Gratuity

The second thing I have called gratuity, which, of course, seems to the modern to be the opposite of debt. One thing I have constantly been referring to has been the element of excess, of the unnecessary, the arbitrary, the non-rational, the gratuitous that is associated with *gratia* and its cognates. Gratuity is something that is detected with the intellect, not with the senses; it is present in us as the known in the knower. When what is offered *grate* is received *grate*, the recipient is becoming somehow non-rational and excessive in the very act of reception. By the same token,

[101] Jacques T Godbout, *Le Don, la Dette et l'Identité. Homo donator vs homo œconomicus*, (Montréal: Éd. de la Découvert-Éd. du Boréal, 2000), 47, cited by Allard, *Que rendrai-je*, 241. As an example, despite her professedly postmodern approach, Robyn Horner cannot see anything positive in debt. In response to John Milbank's suggestions in "Can a Gift be Given?" in *Rethinking Metaphysics*, ed. L Gregory Jones and Stephen E Fowl (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), 119-161, she complains: "But I still cannot believe in a God who obliges my belief, and similarly, a God who constantly places me in debt seems not particularly loving." *Rethinking God as Gift: Marion, Derrida and the Limits of Phenomenology* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2001), 17.

to receive *ingrate* is to receive in a way that either completely ignores the gratuitous quality of the gift, or tries immediately to annul it, to bring it back to the old order, for instance, by seeking to repay the debt immediately.

The difference between the gratuity of evil and the gratuity of good makes for the difference between vindication and gratitude. Vindication is the virtue, Thomas tells us, that completes the natural inclination (found even in animals) to get rid of harmful things, bringing the situation into line with right reason, "preserving due measure according to all the circumstances."[102] Evil is non-rational by way of defect, and it would be possible to allow oneself to be conquered by evil, that is, to slip into the pattern of gratuity in that negative sense. This would be to respond simply by wishing evil on the evil-doer in return, seeking justification from his or her prior action: such a response, warns Thomas, cannot be virtuous.[103] The only virtuous response to evil is one motivated by charity, that seeks somehow to fill the lack, and to make the disorder part of a greater order, either by just punishment from a legitimate authority, or even better by bringing the sinners to repentance, where their penance will satisfy for the disorders they have caused.[104]

On the other hand, any action motivated by love somehow exceeds the rational order, and to accept it as it is, in its excess, is somehow to know its excess. This would seem to be connected with Thomas' insistence that the gift of wisdom is a knowing beyond rational knowledge (even beyond rational reflection on the revealed articles of faith), which is knowledge by connaturality for the one who loves with charity, and is present in all who have *gratia gratum faciens*.[105] And yet this excess,

[102] ST II-II.108.2 cor, ad 3.
[103] ST II-II.108.1 cor.
[104] ST II-II.108.1 cor and ad 1.
[105] ST II-II.45.2 cor, 45.4 ad 1 and ad 2, 45.5 cor.

which exceeds the rational order, is not experienced as disorder, but it establishes a new order, for it is the prerogative of the wise person to put things in order.[106]

Like the known in the knower, the benefactor is present in the beneficiary as the cause of the beneficiary's *gratia*. The change that takes place in the beneficiary, insofar as it can be known to the beneficiary or to others, manifests and honours the goodness of the benefactor: to receive *grate* is already to give thanks. And any further actions that the beneficiary does, presuming they are done in that *gratia*, continue to honour the benefactor. One cannot argue according to strict justice that this will necessarily also involve a grateful repaying of the benefactor, acknowledging both the gift and, by a certain excess, the spirit of the gift - for the return transcends the order of rational necessity: the debt is moral, not legal - but we can observe that it does happen.

4.4.3 Social bonds

This brings us to the third thing caused in the beneficiary by the benefactor: the bond or alliance - we have already seen Caillé talk of *dons d'institution* that set up alliances. Admittedly, we have to look elsewhere in Thomas for specific references to the social bonds created by gifts;[107] nonetheless, this would seem to be what he is referring to when he refers positively to such debt.[108] But perhaps also it is covered by the term *honestas*: the practice of gratitude (and its more specific forms: observance, piety and religion) is necessary to maintain *honestas morum*.

[106] E.g., ST II-II.45.6 cor, with reference to the beginning of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*.

[107] Thomas mentions the bonds between families created by marriages, and the civic bonds created by public feasts. *De Regno* 1.4, *Sententia libri Politicorum*, 2.14.9, ST II-II.63.2 ad 2.

[108] Thomas gives charity as the reason why this debt should not be avoided, but charity, of course, is the bond that holds the building together (ST II-II.4.7 ad 4, cf Col 3:14), the “unitive force” that causes peace (ST II-II.29.3 ad 3).

Because the debt is moral, not legal, the reward and sanction is not some material good or some legal punishment, but honour or the loss of honour. Observing the moral debt of gratitude (or, *a fortiori*, of observance, piety or religion) is necessary for *honestas morum*. Thus the third thing the benefactor causes in the beneficiary is the introduction into a circle where people are showing each other honour, recognising not merely each other's existence, but each other's excellence. And while Thomas has a hierarchical view of excellence, it is not, at least within the human sphere, a totalising view. It is possible for an inferior to excel *secundum quid* over someone who is superior *simpliciter*. And even if one excels and another excels even more, the superior still can and should show honour to the inferior for that excellence with respect to certain others, or even *secundum* se: on the basis of Philippians 2:3, Thomas holds that we can always find something superior and worthy of honour in the other.[109]

Although this willingness to honour others is motivated by charity and serves charity, for Thomas is discussing a Christian virtue, this honour is distinct from charity. Nor is it a recognition of their moral goodness.[110] Nor should it lead to discrimination in matters of distributive justice or in judicial matters.[111] What is being honoured is the place that the person rightly holds in the network of social relations.[112] We see reflected here the concept of the person mentioned earlier by Allard, "the crossroads of adventitious elements through which there is the intersection of a name, a family, a city, a history."[113] The debts created by generation and child-rearing, by governance, or by gifts are the links that make up this network,

[109] ST II-II.103.1 cor, ad 3.
[110] With regard to leaders and benefactors, see ST II-II.103.2 ad 2, 106.3 ad 5 respectively.
[111] ST II-II.63.
[112] ST II-II.63.3 cor.
[113] Allard, *Que rendrai-je*, 52.

and precisely the element of gratuity and excess in these links enables them to be symbolic and meaningful. It is through these relations that one has "face" or "respect," that one is "a name and not a number."

That Thomas owes so much to Seneca reminds us that this Christian virtue has its pagan parallels, and that the idealised social order Thomas hints at has counterparts that are not motivated by charity. Pitt-Rivers reminds us of the complex ways by which honour is established - "Honour is at the same time a sentiment, a guide to action, a quality demonstrated in action and finally the public recognition of that quality" - and that the ways of obtaining honour, and thus the content of the concept, vary across and within societies.[114] What is more, he argues the analogy between honour on the one hand and power and authority on the other.

> For power is what is credited to people, force is what they demonstrate. Hence power, though it may be initiated by a demonstration of force, always searches, in order to secure itself, to become legitimate, in which case it merges into authority. Authority can dispense with force so long as it is not challenged. [. . .] Authority is like honour in that it is a matter of credit and has recourse to force only when it is questioned.[115]

Which brings us back to the point made earlier, that gift-giving and violence (or the threat of violence) are closely parallel and often intertwined ways by which social relations are established, maintained and modified. And we are now in a position to assess the nature of the *hau* that Mauss claims is associated with the gift, and also to look with much more insight at the process of satisfaction.

4.4.4 The modality of the cause: the spirit of the gift

Numerous objections have been raised against the way Mauss speaks of *hau*. Claude Lévi-Strauss, who sees gift-exchange as no different in essence from

[114] Julian Pitt-Rivers, *Mana: An Inaugural Lecture* (London: The London School of Economics and Political Science, 1974), 8.
[115] Pitt-Rivers, *Mana*, 16-17.

commerce, claims that Mauss has adopted the indigenous explanation without analysing what was behind it: just as buying and selling are one reality, so are giving and receiving, and *hau* refers to no reality but plays the rôle of the grammatical copula.[116] Marshall Sahlins, an economist, puts the *hau* narrative that Mauss uses in a wider context, and then proves that *hau* is not the soul; after which, although realising the incongruity of the expression, he reduces *hau* to commercial yield, seeing no inner necessity but only the threat of sanction in its motivating power.[117] Maurice Godelier corrects some of Sahlins' misinterpretations and connects *hau* to the fact that the gift never ceases to be the property of the giver; he finds fault with the way that Mauss seems to speak of the *hau* of the gift as well as of the giver.[118]

There is some consensus on Godelier's basic point. In the pre-modern world, unlike objects sold or bartered, gifts do not (or at least do not necessarily) cease to belong to the giver, a position Thomas also holds.[119] Thus Mauss can say that "one gives away what is in reality a part of one's nature and one's substance, while to receive something is to receive a part of someone's spiritual essence."[120] The "spiritual essence" is not a ghost or the presence of the soul travelling outside the body (Sahlins is right, but Mauss never claimed this), but it is, first of all, that quality of excess and arbitrariness that makes the object in question a gift. Even if the gift is not motivated by charity, this excess places the gift in a different order from market exchange, *contra* Lévi-Strauss. The order is a social construct, but for

[116] Claude Lévi-Strauss, "Introduction" in Marcel Mauss, *Œuvres*, ed. Viktor Karády, vol. III (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1973), xxxix-xl

[117] Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics*, 149-168.

[118] Maurice Godelier, *The Enigma of the Gift*, tr. Nora Scott (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999), 48, 52-55.

[119] ST I.38.1 cor, where a gift is something the recipient can *uti et frui*. Nonetheless the gift remains "of" the giver through its origin. Before being given, the gift "is of the giver alone" (*est tantum dantis*); afterwards, "it is [also] of the one to whom it is given." ST I.38.2 ad 3.

[120] *The Gift*, 10.

those who operate within the understanding that recognises that construct, the gift really belongs in that order, as Mauss notes.[121] The gift can only be assimilated by the recipient if the recipient begins or continues to act within the logic of that order. Moreover, to give the gift is an act of recognition, and recognition is of its essence mutual. If the gift is given and received *grate* (as *gratus* would be understood in that society), then the impulse to somehow return the gift (in a culturally appropriate way) will also be present. Moreover, the excess is the action of a particular individual or moral person and it always retains that personal quality: the recipient is moved to generosity in a way that somehow bears the stamp of the giver. Even if the gift-object is handed on to a third party, the impulse to make an act of return to the original giver at the appropriate time remains.[122] And, as we have said, the bond created also confers some social standing. It is not surprising that the Maori think of this impulse in terms of a word that can also mean excess, fertility and prestige (but not economic return).

As long as the object remains, it bears witness to the original act of generosity[123] In this light, Mauss declares that the gift is not inert, but it continues to exercise its power; indeed he notes that the gift-object may be personified, and later he gives some examples from the tribes of the Pacific coast of North America.[124] The personification is an aid to understanding, and it may help us to enter the minds of the actors in that society, but the phenomena can still be accounted for without making the gift-object into a person in the modern western sense. It is still the *hau* of the giver in the gift, although we can see how one can talk of the object as the *hau*, or

[121] See remarks on the "illusion of the real" at 4.3.2.

[122] Tamati Ranapiri takes this for granted in his celebrated explanation of *hau*. Mauss, *The Gift*, 8-9.

[123] In fact, Seneca counsels giving a permanent object that will be seen by recipient to increase one's likelihood of receiving a countergift. "Ipsa res evanescentem memoriam excitet." Seneca *De Beneficiis* 1.12.1.

[124] *The Gift*, 10, 43-44.

the return gift. After all, are not the favour of the giver, the gift object, and the return of thanks all termed *gratia*?

In these anthropological examples, the exchange takes place in a background of fear. Each actor is trying to establish his own honour for the sake of personal safety, and each is wary lest his own status should slip: as Pitt-Rivers points out, it is honourable to submit to one higher in honour, but not to one who is lower.[125] It is not surprising, then, that a failure to listen to the *hau* and to show honour to the giver, which risk reducing his status, might be met with sanctions of violence or sorcery, and that fear of these sanctions may be a motive for returning the gift. As Thomas makes clear in a parallel case, the violent sanctions are for that small minority who will not listen to reason and who threaten the whole social order - although in time some of them, following the law from fear, may come to appreciate its wisdom: good people obey the law because it is reasonable, not through fear of punishment;[126] similarly, honourable people return gifts because that is the honourable thing to do.

4.5 Satisfaction revisited

This brings us to the topic of satisfaction. Gisbert Greshake argues that Germanic feudal society supplies the social background necessary to understand Anselm's theory of satisfaction. In such a society, as *honor* implied social standing, to damage someone's honour, to cause offence, was to weaken their social status; and the more crucial that person's status was to the whole interconnected network of status that held society together, the more that the offence damaged not merely a

[125] Pitt-Rivers, *Mana*, 17.
[126] ST I-II.90.1 cor.

private good but the common good: the higher the person's rank, the more serious the offence.[127]

The offence, which upset the order, could be counteracted by a punishment, which did not simply balance the material wrong done, but re-established the honour that was lost and so the social order. And, as we have seen, punishment, particularly in a society without a central state - in which perhaps the Melanesian term "payback" seems to me more appropriate - can lead to an escalation of violence. Thus it is easy to see the attraction of satisfaction or compensation, in which the offending side voluntarily makes a gift which re-establishes the honour of the wronged party. And indeed, the wronged party may initiate a demand for compensation first, rather than immediately seeking payback.[128]

Gisbert Greshake rightly points out that this is the social background to Anselm's teaching on satisfaction.[129] More so than any king, it is God whose honour is the source of peace and stability. God seeks to have his honour restored, therefore, not for his own sake (as Anselm insists) but for ours.[130] And as we should be prepared to let the whole universe go to ruin rather than sin, God's honour is so

[127] Gisbert Greshake, "Erlösung und Freiheit: Zur neuinterpretation der Erlösunglehre Anselms von Canterbury," *Theologische Quartalschrift* 153 (1973): 331.

[128] Greshake, "Erlösung," 332-333. Jean-Pierre Torrell OP sees a similar background in Roman law. However, he focuses on the will to restore friendship so that the question of the loss of honour - with all its attendant dangers - is totally eclipsed. *Le Christ en ses mystères: la vie et l'œuvre de Jésus selon saint Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris: Desclée, 1999), 2:400. This approach could be balanced by the description of satisfaction in a much more violent society, where there is a real tension between the fear of losing honour and the fear of the continuation or escalation of violence. See, for instance, Jamous, "From the death," 181

[129] But not everyone agrees, partly because, as Guy Mansini points out, most people who look to Germanic society as Anselm's inspiration for satisfaction seem to do so in order to reject the notion as alien to Christianity. Thus Mansini then goes on to argue, not only that the notion belongs to the Church, but that it "can be located quite specifically in Benedictine *monastic* theory and practice." "St. Anselm, *Satisfactio*, and the 'Rule' of St. Benedict," *Revue Bénédictine* 97 (1987): 102n 9, 103. However, all he can prove is that satisfaction is found even there. Our argument is that satisfaction is a fairly standard feature of any society in which honour and gift-exchange are prominent: it is only where these languish, as in the modern west, that satisfaction becomes a scandal. Besides, whatever its origin for Anselm, Thomas clearly has secular satisfaction in mind as is clear from the examples he uses, e.g. *De Rationibus Fidei* 7, *Summa Contra Gentiles* 4.55.25.

[130] Greshake, "Erlösung," 333-334.

great that an offence against God is of infinite magnitude.[131]

In particular, Greshake claims for the king to forgive an offence without satisfaction being made is a dereliction of duty, for it weakens the fabric of society. Anselm, he claims, is right therefore to hold that it is not possible for God to forgive sin without satisfaction. That Thomas is prepared to countenance that possibility, says Greshake, is evidence that the feudal structure had already weakened so that the king could be considered as a private person.[132]

It is more reasonable to say that here Thomas thinks, once again, that Anselm has proved too much.[133] God is a prisoner of no system and is "debtor" only to himself. There are always other possibilities open to God, and so God could have forgiven our offence without satisfaction.[134] The initiative is on the side of God who genuinely seeks reconciliation, and the means chosen is one fit for the need. In the merely human sphere, the possibility of true satisfaction depends on the system of honour, so that the desire for peace and maintenance of honour can be in conflict; particularly where the restoration of honour can only be congruous and not condign (for what is commensurate with a human life?), satisfaction will always be ultimately unsatisfying.[135] But we shall explore this more after we have dealt with sanctifying grace and salvation.

[131] Greshake, "Erlösung," 336.
[132] Greshake, "Erlösung," 335.
[133] Just as Thomas argues against the validity of the "ontological argument" (ST I.2.1 ad 2) and any proof of the Trinity from reason (ST I.32.1 cor).
[134] ST III.46.2 ad 3.
[135] Jamous, "From the death," 182-183. Interestingly, in this case an attempt is made to ground the value of the *'ar* (the sheep killed in the place of the offender) in the ram that Abraham offers in place of his son.

CHAPTER FIVE
GRACE

For Thomas the goal of human life is beatitude and, until we reach it, the only thing that gives purpose to our actions, and thus makes them truly human actions (truly actions of an image of God), is that they might contribute to earning beatitude. Not only does Thomas begin *Prima Secundae* with five questions on the quest for beatitude, but he ends it with the question on merit. Thus this theme of merit, and therefore of exchange, frames the work:[1] all human action is to be seen as part of an exchange with God. Therefore, when grace enters the discussion in the last tract of *Prima Secundae*, it is not to replace human endeavour or to render exchange obsolete, but rather to transform these things so that they can earn beatitude. Thomas made it clear from the beginning that beatitude had to be earned as it was not the result of our own natural operations; as he works through the types of human actions (acts of the will and acts of the irrational appetites (passions)), the interior principles of human actions (virtues, and by defect, vices and sin) and the exterior principles (law) he is constantly showing this inadequacy:[2] acquired virtues need to be perfected by the infused virtues and the gifts of the Holy Spirit; in fallen humanity the natural law needs to be supplemented by divine law, but the Old Law serves to show the inadequacy of any law unless it also bestows grace. Grace therefore comes as the fulfilment of all the other (positive) principles of human action, not as their replacement.[3]

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1 Cf Ghislain Lafont OSB, *Structures et méthode dans la Somme Théologique de saint Thomas d'Aquin* (Bruges: Desclée de Brouwer, 1961), 257.

2 Lafont also points out that sin, law and grace indicate a biblical and historical development, especially given the way that Thomas goes from orginal sin and natural law, through the Old Law, to the New Law of grace: *Structures,* 261.

3 Cf note earlier about taking the qq. 90-108 as a self-sufficient "treatise on law." (Note 132 in 3.4.3). Thus Joseph Wawrykow considers tenable Cornelius Ernst's view that the tract on grace begins with the discussion of the New Law in q.106, although Wawrykow himself starts at q.109. "Grace" in *The Theology of Thomas Aquinas*, ed. Rik van Nieuwenhove and Joseph Wawrykow,

In composing *Prima Secundae*, therefore, Thomas is immediately faced with two problems that confronted Mauss as well: how to show that the exchange that leads to beatitude is irreducible to commercial exchange; and how to talk of grace/*hau* as something that comes from the Giver/giver bearing something of himself, so that we perform actions that return to and honour him, without being accused of mystification. There is a third problem which Thomas alludes to here but which will emerge fully in *Tertia Pars*: how can grace be borne and caused by a created nature, such as the humanity of Christ, and *a fortiori* a sacrament?

Thomas deals with these issues according to the scholastic categories and approaches available to him. As grace is a sharing in the divine nature, he cannot begin with a definition of grace, and so, as he does with God at the beginning of the *Summa*, he deals with the effects of which grace is a cause in place of a definition;[4] thus this question (109) synthesizes all the earlier discussion about those things we need to do to reach beatitude but which lie beyond our power.[5] The second question considers the essence of grace: as grace is a sharing in the divine nature, this is not directly a question about the essence of divinity, but about the way our soul is transformed when it participates in the divine nature.[6] The third question, considering the divisions of grace, pinpoints from among all the traditional theological uses of "grace" which one is primary (*gratia gratum faciens*) and how the others are related, as well as then distinguishing habitual and actual, operating and co-operating grace. Grace as a sharing in the divine nature is once again prominent

(Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), 192. Cf Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, vol. 30 *The Gospel of Grace Ia IIae q. 106-114* , ed. Cornelius Ernst, (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1972)

4 ST I.1.7 ad 1 and I.2.2 ad 2; I-II.112.5 cor, *pace* Lafont, who claims that the standard scholastic analysis begins only with q. 110. *Structures*, 255.

5 Lafont, *Structures*, 254.

6 This is more clearly argued at *Scriptum* 2.26.1.1 cor.

in the fourth question on the cause of grace, insisting that only God can be the principal cause, although instrumental causes can be used: this leads to a strongly Augustinian doctrine of predestination and the primacy of grace, and our inability to know for certain that we have it. And in the fifth and sixth questions we have the effects of operating and co-operating grace: justification and merit respectively, and thus the tract culminates in showing how grace enables the exchanges that lead to beatitude. I want to consider the tract on grace by asking how Thomas' position has developed since the *Scriptum*, and in particular how these developments help him to deal with the three problems mentioned above.

5.1 Developments in the doctrine on grace

5.1.1 Predestination and grace as gift

In 1944 Henri Bouillard first argued the case that there had been a major shift in Thomas' approach to justification.[7] In the *Scriptum* he accepts the general validity of the adage *facienti quod in se est, Deus non denegat gratiam* (God does not deny grace to the one who does what is in his ability).[8] However, through a careful reading of Augustine, particularly *De Dono Perseverentiae* and *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum*, he came to the conviction that to merit first grace would be contrary to the very meaning of grace as a free gift, and also to grace as something totally beyond our nature - and *a fortiori* someone who is not in grace cannot merit beatitude.[9] One cannot even say that faith comes from us and merits grace, for the beginning of true faith is from God, and faith does not merit justication: rather, it is

[7] Henri Bouillard, *Conversion et grâce chez S. Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris: Aubier, 1944), 102-114.
[8] *Scriptum* 2.42.1.5 ad 7, 3.25.2.1.1.ad 2, 4.17.1.2, 4.20.1.1.1 cor.
[9] ST I-II.114.5 cor, 114.2.

an integral part of the process of justification and one is not justified without it.[10] Nor can one "merit" first grace after the event by making good use of it.[11] Further, it is by divine ordination alone that those in grace are able to merit, and even then they will fail to achieve beatitude unless God also grants the utterly unmeritable grace of perseverance.[12] This is entirely in accord with Thomas' position that there is nothing in us that can go any way to explaining why God chooses one person rather than another: it lies entirely in the inscrutable will and good pleasure of God.[13] There is no point looking for a reason in us: thus we can say that grace is gratuitous both as gift and as lacking reason. This starkly Augustinian approach to grace and predestination puts Thomas closer to Calvin than to the sympathies of some Thomists, but it is part and parcel of Thomas' insistence that grace is a gift and indeed the utterly transcendent gift of a sharing in the divine nature.[14]

Stark this teaching may seem, but it serves to remove grace entirely from the domain of commercial exchange. Commercial exchange takes place within the bounds of strict justice, mediated by a law, a dictate of right reason, before whom both parties are equal, and has nothing in common with the gift of grace. As one illustration of this, even when one in grace does merit an increase of grace, that increase is not owed to him immediately as in commerce, but, as in gift exchange, is given when God sees fit.[15] More to the point, even the act of gaining by the recipient is radically different: true, grace causes in the soul is a habitual quality through

[10] ST I-II.114.5 ad 1.
[11] ST I-II.114.5 ad 3.
[12] ST I-II.114.1, 114.9.
[13] ST I.23.5 cor., ad 3; cf *Super Ioannem* 6.5 (M938).
[14] "On the beginning of justification there is no disagreement between us and the sounder Schoolmen." John Calvin, cited in Gerrish, *Grace and Gratitude*, 97. On the other hand, François Daguet finds Thomas' teaching on predestination disturbing, and argues that it goes against other currents in his theology, and that Thomas reluctantly accepted it out of deference to the authority of Augustine. *Théologie du dessein divin chez Thomas d'Aquin: Finis omnium Ecclesia* (Paris: Vrin, 2003), 324-342, esp. 334, 340-341.
[15] ST I-II.114.8 ad 3.

which the possessor can *uti* and *frui* the Holy Spirit when she likes (thus satisfying another of Thomas' definitions of the gift), but - in contrast to commercial exchange, where the thing transferred is alienated from the original owner - grace entails a participation in the divine nature which never ceases to belong to God.[16] There is a difference here far more radical than anything Mauss could have talked about. In most of the later points I shall be looking at grace as "spirit," but the achievement of this development in Thomas' position is to make this spirit the spirit of the *gift*.

5.1.2 The threefold meaning of *gratia*

5.1.2.1 From two meanings to three

This focus on the gratuity of grace is necessary given the constant background presence of exchange. But grace comes to perfect exchange, not to replace it, and a second advance found in the *Summa* is that the gift is seen as intrinsically in relation to exchange through Thomas' recapturing of the fulness of the original meaning of *gratia*. We have already discussed at length *gratia* as favour, gift object and return of thanks, but it should be pointed out that this is an innovation for Thomas. In his earlier works he only gives theological significance to two meanings of *gratia* and *gratus*: freely given and favour or acceptance.[17] The threefold nature of grace is mentioned only once in the tract on grace, but without it the tract would stop at the question on justification, and our return acts of gratitude, although of great importance, would be seen as external to grace, and thus unconnnected with the

[16] ST I.38.1 cor, ad 1; I-II.110.2 cor. Unlike Mauss, Thomas states that ownership passes with the transfer of a material gift object, but, given their common understanding of the debt of gratitude, this probably arises from the difference between Thomas' concept of ownership and what it means for Mauss to say something belongs to someone. Thomas is adamant that a spiritual good is not lost in the giving. *Contra Impugnantes* 2.3 ad 19.

[17] *De Veritate* 27.1 cor.

bestowal of beatitude (as would seem to be the case for Calvin).[18]

But there is a further corollary to this development. When in the *Scriptum* Thomas explains grace with reference to only two meanings of *gratus*, he does not base himself on the connection between the two, but for the one reality of the gift of grace he provides a separate argument for each of the meanings.[19] In the *Summa* Thomas considers the meanings as related (so that the favour gives rise to the gift object, and the gift object to the thanks), but asks if there is something in the soul that corresponds to each of the three meanings; taking it as obvious that this is the case for the second and third meanings, he focuses on the first.[20] This question, I contend, can only be understood if we anticipate what Thomas will say later *de gratia sive gratitudine*, where he distinguishes clearly between the spirit of the gift (*affectus* or *animus*) and the gift object (*effectus*), giving clear priority to the former - and we have already argued that it is through the spirit of the gift that the benefactor causes something in the beneficiary. Moreover, because Thomas is asking whether anything is posited in the soul, he is clearly talking here about grace and not about predestination, which posits nothing in the soul but is solely in the mind of God, and thus one can be in mortal sin but still be favoured (predestined) by God.[21] Without that reference to what follows in *Secunda Secundae* the threefold meaning of *gratia* will be pointless.[22] Nonetheless, the need for such a connection is clearly

[18] Calvin insisted that, at least with the "sounder Schoolmen" the dispute was not about justification, but about merit. Gerrish, *Grace and Gratitude*, 98.

[19] *Scriptum* 2.26.1.1.cor. The same two meanings are mentioned at *De Veritate* 27.1 cor, but now he sees that favour implies the gift but not *vice versa*; thus it is possible to have *gratia gratis data* without *gratia gratum faciens*.

[20] ST I-II.110.1 cor.

[21] ST I.23.2, *De* Veritate 27.1 cor. However, he does acknowledge that, loosely speaking, sometimes predestination is referred to as a grace. ST I-II.110.1 cor.

[22] One who does note the connection in the works of Thomas is Vivian Boland, "An Education in Gratitude," *Religious Life Review* Vol. 51, No. 275 (July/August 2012): 221-222.
Garrigou-Lagrange, who deserves credit for actually paying close attention to this threefold meaning, fails to refer to the difference between the gift and the spirit of the gift and is thus wrong on two points: he identifies the first meaning (favour) with predestination, and the

seen by commentators: as Ghislain Lafont observes with regard to the overall treatise on grace, by connecting grace both with something that comes from God that makes us like God, and with the principle that results in acts of gratitude by which we return to God, Thomas has a view of grace that covers both of the divine aspects of human action that are considered in *Prima Secundae*: God as the exemplar, and God as the final goal.[23]

Thomas is careful here to point out that, unlike human love, divine love makes the loved one good, so that the divine favour makes us pleasing (*gratus*) to God.[24] There has been a slight shift in the emphasis here: in earlier works, it was on grace as something created.[25] However, by the time of the *Summa* Thomas held that any benefactor causes something in the beneficiary; the difference is that human love "does not totally cause the goodness of a thing, but presupposes it in part or *in toto*," but God's love is utterly gratuitous, taking us into a new economy where we can perform meritorious acts[26]. It is God who is the efficient cause of that change, and the grace in our souls (whatever it is) is the formal cause.[27] Thus it may be possible to receive the gift object ungraciously and ungratefully (as we shall see in the case of fiction); and it is also possible, by anticipation, be filled with *gratia* in anticipation of

second (the gift object) with the habitual quality in the soul. *Grace*, 3-4, 114.

Thomas de Vio Cajetan does not note the linking of favour, object and gratitude when considering this article in his *Commentaria*, (published as a running commentary in the Leonine Edition of the *Summa Theologiae*). Not is it found in the following 20th century annotated editions of the tract on grace: Thomas Aquinas, *Somme Théologique: La Grace 1a-2ae Questions 109-114*, Éditions de la Revue des Jeunes, tr. R. Mulard OP (Paris: Desclée, 1929); *Somme Théologique: La Grace 1a-2ae Questions 109-114*, Éditions du Cerf, tr. Ch. V. Hêris OP (Paris: Desclée, 1961); Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, vol. 30 *The Gospel of Grace Ia IIae q. 106-114* ed. Cornelius Ernst (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1972), nor in some more recent discussions of Thomas on grace, such as Wawrykow,"Grace," or Brian Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992).

23 Lafont, *Structures*, 259-260.

24 ST I-II.110.1 cor, ad 1.

25 *Scriptum* 2.26.1.1 cor, *De Veritate* 27.1 cor. The ad 1 in the *Scriptum* article hints at the possibility of acceptance causing something in the favoured one, but this hint is absent in the corresponding ad 2 of the *De Veritate* article.

26 ST I-II.110.1 cor, cf II-II.106.3 cor.

27 ST I-II.110.1 ad 2, 110.2 ad 1.

a gift object yet to be received;[28] but it is not possible to possess *gratia* and be *ingratus*.

5.1.2.2 Corroboration from the biblical commentaries

Many passages in the scripture commentaries imply that to become *gratus* means to become grateful as well as acceptable.[29]

For instance, in his commentary on Galatians 2:21 Thomas says.

> Therefore he says, because I have received so much from God, because he handed himself over, and I live in the faith of the Son of God, "I do not throw away *gratiam Dei*," that is, I do not repudiate it, nor do I present myself as *ingratum*. (1 Cor 15:10 "*Gratia Dei* in me was not empty," etc.) Whence another reading has "Non sum ingratus gratiae Dei." (Heb 12:15: "Being careful lest anyone be lacking to the *gratia Dei*,"), that is, declaring himself unworthy through ingratitude.[30]

Thomas holds that to give thanks is to acknowledge the favour, *recognoscere gratiam sibi factam*.[31] However, given that we can only know like by like, and given that its essence is ineffable, it is the very grace that we are given that enables us to perceive it. Thus Thomas gives the mystical explanation of "Come and see." "[F]or the dwelling (*habitatio*) of God, either of grace or of glory, cannot be known except through experience, for it cannot be explained in words. (Rev 2:17 "on a stone a new name," etc.)"[32] Logically, therefore, there can be no gratitude without grace, and in line with this, when commenting on the thanksgiving at the beginning of 1 Corinthians, Thomas notes that thanksgiving to God is done "per gratiam Dei."[33] We get the whole argument presented in a different form later in the

[28] Raymond Hain, *The Virtue of Gratitude according to St. Thomas Aquinas*, (PhD diss., Pontificium Institutum Angelicum, 1953), 186, with reference to ST II-II.88.5 ad 2.
[29] I am grateful for a conversation with Richard Conrad OP in which he gave me the idea that *gratum faciens* could also mean "making grateful."
[30] *Super Galatas* cap. 2, lect. 6 (M111).
[31] *Super Philippenses*, cap. 1, lect. 1 (M9).
[32] *Super Ioannem* cap. 1, lect. 15 (M292)
[33] *Super 1 Corinthios*, cap. 1 lect. 1 (M12-15)

same commentary: noting that Paul does not want his addressees to be ignorant of spiritual things, which Thomas takes to be *spirituales gratias* (both *gratis datae* and *gratum facientes*), he cites Seneca that ignorance of benefits is ingratitude, and then immediately points out that God acts to prevent this ingratitude: "As it says above, 2:12, *We have received* spiritum *which is from God, so that we may know the things that have been given to us by God*."[34] This double connection, that not only should *gratia* (favour) be acknowledged by *gratia* (thanks), but also that it is through the very favour granted that we are enabled to make the return can be seen in his comments on the thanksgiving at the beginning of Romans. After remarking on the naturalness and necessity of gratitude (citing Ecclesiastes about rivers, as he did in the dedication to the *Catena*), he notes "Thanksgiving (*gratiarum actio*) should flow back to God in the same *ordo* as graces (*gratiae*) from God come down to us, that is, through Jesus Christ."[35]

Looking at it another way, the "spirit" of the gift cannot be received except insofar as it produces something similar to what sent it. The *spiritum filii* that regenerates us as children of God acts like human seed, as Thomas says explicitly elsewhere.[36] Thus the spirit of the gift has the *hau*-like qualities of seeking return, of honouring its source, and of fertility. But we now need to consider its ontological status.

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[34] *Super I Corinthios*, cap. 12, lect. 1 (M710).

[35] *Super Romanos*, cap. 1, lect. 5 (M75-M76).

[36] *Super Galatas* cap. 4, lect. 3 (M214). He uses the same comparison at *Super Titum* prologus (M1), but there, following the parable of the sower, the seed is the "word of God" - not the person of the Son, but, as another biblical quote makes clear, the Gospel.

5.1.3 Is grace the sort of thing that can be effected by an instrument?

5.1.3.1 Is grace created?

In the *Scriptum* Thomas specifically talks of grace as something created (*aliquid creatum*).[37] It might be said that he simply means that it is something in the created order, but given that he also holds that when it is corrupted (when a soul loses grace) it reverts to nothing, it seems that he means created in the strict sense of the term.[38] This is despite maintaining that grace is an accident.[39] But it does not take long for Thomas to argue that grace, as an accident, has the mode of being of an accident: strictly speaking, accidents are not created or annihilated, but rather they are co-created with the substance in which they inhere.[40] In the *Summa* we get the mature argument: unlike in the *Scriptum* and *De Veritate*, he realises that the question is not whether grace is something created, but whether it posits something in the soul.[41] Then he argues that as a quality grace is not a substance but an accident; thus it is not generated or corrupted in itself, but it is said to come to be or cease to be insofar as the substance begins or ceases to be in act according to this accident. If at times it is spoken of as being created, this is using the term loosely, to denote that it brings about a new way of being, and that this is "ex nihilo," that is, not on the basis of merit.[42]

What is at stake here is not only what grace is, but who or what can cause it. Throughout his writings, Thomas is adamant, against Avicenna, Al-Ghazali and even the Master of the *Sentences*, that only God can create, and that the power to

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[37] *Scriptum* 2.26.1.1.
[38] *Scriptum* 2.26.1.2 ad 5.
[39] *Scriptum* 2.26.1.2.
[40] *De Veritate* 27.1 ad 8, 27.3 ad 9, although at 27.1 ad 1, ad 6, he talks of grace as created.
[41] *Scriptum* 2.26.1.1, *De Veritate* 27.1, ST I-II.110.1.
[42] ST I-II.110.2 ad 3.

create cannot be communicated to any creature, even instrumentally.[43] On the other hand, he wants to affirm with the tradition that sacraments cause and contain grace.[44] Now, when he began as a theologian he faced the obstacle not only of the created status of grace, but also of the nobility of grace and of the Avicennan model of instrumental causality. The obstacle of the created status of grace was overcome quickly, as we have seen, but the others took more time.

5.1.3.2 Instrumental causality

As Hyacinth Dondaine has shown, Thomas' original understanding of instrumental causes came from Avicenna. According to this model, the instrument prepares or disposes the matter so that it is ready to receive the form from the principal cause; the paradigm is human reproduction, where the semen disposes the matter and God creates the soul. As the human soul is a substantial form, its coming into being is creation and only God can achieve it. Not surprisingly, in this model there is no *communicatio* between the principal and the instrumental cause.[45] But there was also an understanding of instrumental causes that came from Aristotle *via* Averroes, where the principal cause is an unmoved mover, and the instrumental cause is the moved mover. Here the instrumental cause is subordinated to the principal one; there is one causality, and one movement that flows through the instrumental cause, so that it is present therein in an incomplete way.[46] Moved

[43] *Scriptum* 2.1.1.3 cor, *De Veritate* 5.9 cor, *De Potentia* 3.4 cor, *Summa Contra Gentiles* 2.21, ST I.45.5 cor. There is a good analysis of the development of Thomas' position on the communicability of the power to create, to bestow grace, and to work miracles in M. Benoît Lavaud OP, "Saint Thomas et la causalité physique instrumentale de la sainte humanité et des sacrements à propos d'un livre récent," *Revue Thomiste* 32 (1927), 292-316. In what follows I consider the texts he studies, but also pay attention to the issues of causality and nobility.

[44] Thus as early as *Scriptum* 4.1.1.4.1 cor he opposes the explanation that sacraments are causes *sine quibus non* as "not being sufficient to save the sayings of the saints" who held that sacraments in some way cause grace.

[45] Dondaine, "À propos," 441-443.

[46] Dondaine, "À propos," 448.

movers and incomplete forms are already mentioned when Thomas is explaining sacramental causality in the *Scriptum*, but it takes time for Thomas to completely relinquish the idea that the instrumental cause is only dispositive.[47] He gets very close to it in *De Veritate* when discussing the headship of Christ (which he has according to his humanity), but is careful to include a qualifier: Christ achieves our salvation "*quasi* ex propria virtute."[48]

5.1.3.3 The nobility of grace

One of the reasons for this reluctance was the nobility of grace. Thomas was familiar with the saying of Augustine that it is a greater work to justify the sinner than to create the world.[49] Moreover, grace was a participation in the divine nature and so nobler than the human soul.[50] The creation of the world presupposes no matter, either *ex qua* or *in qua* the forms are produced; the creation of a human soul is *ex nihilo* but it presupposes matter *in qua*, because in the normal course of events there is an embryo there waiting to be informed. Thus there can be no instrumental cause for the creation of the world, and any instrumental cause for the creation of a human soul can be merely dispositive.[51] Initially, Thomas would not admit that an instrumental cause could have an effective role in the nobler role of producing grace in the soul. Thus all the sacrament could do was to prepare the soul (by producing character or some *ornatus animae*) for God to pour in the grace.[52]

47 *Scriptum* 4.1.1.4.1 cor, 4.1.1.4.2 cor, 4.1.1.4.1 cor, 4.1.1.4.4 cor, ad 1.

48 *De Veritate* 29.4, 29.5 cor, ad 3. Jean-Pierre Torrell does not give the same weight to the *quasi* as I do: *Saint Thomas Aquinas* vol. 1 *The Person and his Work*, tr. Robert Royal (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1996), 66n 53.

49 Used against the communicability of the conferral of grace at *Scriptum* 4.5.1.2 sed contra 2, *De Veritate* 27.3 sed contra 4; At *De Potentia* 3.4 obj 8 it is used to argue *a fortiori* that God can share the power of creating: the response insists that any sacramental instrumentality is merely dispositive.

50 *De Veritate* 27.3 cor gives three variations on this theme.

51 *De Potentia* 3.4 ad 7.

52 *Scriptum* 4.1.1.4.1 cor, *De Veritate* 27.4 ad 3, *De Potentia* 3.4 ad 8. The *ornatus animae* is

Originally Thomas, taking grace as that which joins the soul to its greatest good, talks of the nobility of grace *vis-à-vis* the soul as an argument against its being an accident of the soul, and responds by arguing that accidents in general are in some way more noble than their subjects, and thus the nobility of grace is preserved: the final conclusion affirms the nobility of grace.[53] He does not seem to bring up this argument again until the *Summa*, and there, elegantly arguing from the very nobility of grace as a participation in the divine nature and through the principle that the qualities of God that are identical with his substance are participated in us as accidents, he is able to conclude the response by saying that, in its mode of being, grace is less noble than the human soul.[54] But I suspect that he was helped to make this reversal and so escape from the restrictions of the nobility of grace by a parallel case, that of miracles.

5.1.3.4 A change on the communicability of miraculous power

In the *Scriptum* Thomas insists that the power to change the law or course of nature belongs solely to the one who established that nature, and so the power to work miracles directly belongs solely to God and cannot be communicated to any creature - creatures, of course, could bring about miracles by intercession and merit, but that is a different matter. Thus not even the soul of Christ had the power to work miracles effectively, and those that he does work without any intercession are to be seen as signs of his divinity.[55]

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mentioned only in the *Scriptum*.

53 *Scriptum* 2.26.1 2 obj 3 and ad 3; this argument about grace is repeated and strengthened when discussing whether beatitude is an accident, 4.49.1.2.1 ad 5.

54 ST I-II.110.2 ad 2.

55 *Scriptum* 3.16.1.3 cor. *De Veritate* 24.4 cor states that Christ's humanity was an organ of his divinity, and thus somehow shared in the divine operation instrumentally, both at the bodily level (miracles) and the spiritual (justification). In ad 3 he argues that the sacraments are merely disposing instruments, thus there is no clear ground for presuming that Christ's humanity works

But in *De Potentia* he does something quite different.[56] In the first of two connected articles, he argues that creatures cannot perform miracles by any natural power, that is, they cannot impress a form upon matter: anything that angels do, they achieve by causing local motion on natural agents, and so the result is a work of technical skill (*ars*) rather than a miracle. In the next article he asks whether "good angels and people can perform miracles by a gift of grace?" Here he starts by saying that it seems that they can do so by grace, and then gives nine arguments, including a striking one which is based on Augustine's maxim: "Every thing which is not diminished in the giving, as long as it is possessed and not given is not yet possessed in the way it should be possessed."[57] These are followed by the sed contra "Who alone does great miracles" (Ps 71:18) accompanied by the same argument he used in the *Scriptum*, now identified as coming from Bernard. Everything prepares us to expect the same answer as in the *Scriptum*.

However, here Thomas prefers to follow the definite position of Gregory the Great over the hesitations of Augustine, and holds that by the gift of God saints, even while living in the flesh, can perform miracles not only by prayer but also *potestative*, although the power is not a *habitus* but is given as God sees fit.[58] He is won over both by the examples Gregory gives, and his argument: "if people are given the power (*potestas*) to become children of God, is it any wonder if they have the power (*ex potestate possunt*) to work wonders." What happens, Thomas

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miracles as an effective instrument.

56 *De Potentia* 6.3 - 6.4.

57 Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana* 2.1, cited at *De Potentia* 6.4 obj 9. The Marietti text has a different text for this quote, but Thomas responds to it as though it were the version above, which he cites correctly at *Contra Impugnanates* 2.3.19.

58 *De Potentia* 6.4 cor; cf ST II-II.178.1 ad 1. Cajetan, referring to these texts in his comments on the power of Christ's soul at ST III.13.2, holds that possibly Thomas, "having grown wiser (*doctior seipso*)" has corrected himself. *Commentaria*, ad locum. Cf M.-Benoît Lavaud, "Saint Thomas et la causalité physique instrumentale de la sainte humanité et des sacrements à propos d'un livre récent," *Revue Thomiste* 32 (1927): 298.

explains, is that the rational agents are the mediators of the divine *imperium* to the nature in which the miracle takes place. This *imperium* is present not as a habitual virtue, but "in the manner of those imperfect forms that are called *intentiones*, which do not remain except throught the presence of the principal agent, like light in the air and movement in an instrument." He adds that this is the way that prophecy works, and also the way God "uses a bodily creature for the justification of spirits, as is clearly the case in the sacraments." He then responds to all the "objections" at once by saying that it is true (*verum est*) that only God performs miracles *per auctoritatem*, but also *verum est* that he communicates this power to creatures, who operate by *ministerium*.

The structure gives the impression that Thomas changed his mind in the very process of composing the article, which, given that these disputed questions are the results of a seminar session with advanced students, may be Thomas' intention.[59] In terms of the content, this seems to be the earliest case of Thomas using full-blown effective instrumental causality, and strikingly he cites the sacraments as a precedent, even though only three questions earlier he maintained that sacraments work dispositively. He has found arguments that God's power is strengthened rather than diminished by bestowing that power on others according to their capacity and divine wisdom, so that half the argument from nobility is gone, and it seems to have taken very little effort after that to show that the accidental status of grace overcomes the other half of the argument. The paradigm has shifted: forming grace in the soul is no longer considered on analogy with God pouring a soul into an embryo prepared by human seed, but on analogy with colours on a wall, activated by the light, sending

[59] On the manner of composition of *De Veritate* and *De Potentia*, see Torrell OP, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 1:59-67.

incomplete forms of a "spiritual" or "intentional" nature through the air to the eyes of the beholder.[60] In this development, of course, Thomas finds patristic justification in John Damascene's statement that the humanity (body and soul) of Christ is the *organon* or instrument of his divinity.[61] Thus, making the distinction between the humanity as a conjoint instrument of his divinity (like a hand) and the sacraments as a disjoint instrument (like a stick held by the hand), Thomas in the *Summa* can talk of sacraments as instrumental efficient causes of grace (with God all the time the principal cause);[62] and even though sacraments are not rational beings and have no soul that can be graced, grace is present in the sacraments as the effect is present in the cause, and thus in an incomplete way, as the form of a bed is present in an incomplete way in the axe, flowing through it from the mind of the carpenter into the bed.[63]

5.1.4 The end results: grace is like *hau*

The Aristotelian terms and categories are the means to an end, and when he comes to the *Summa* Thomas can employ them to present an intellectually respectable explanation of grace that is as close to *hau* as one could wish.[64] Grace is the *hau* of God the giver, which is present in the gift, bearing God to the recipient in a spiritual way, so that by means of the gift the giver receives a participation in God. God remains unchanged, but this participation is the transformation of the soul of the

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60 Thomas already used the analogy of light at *De Veritate* 27.4 ad 4 and ad 5, where he explained that these "spirits," as incomplete beings, are neither corporeal nor incorporeal. But here he is using it to talk of effective rather than dispositive instrumentality.

61 For the development in Thomas' use of this formula, see Dondaine, "À propos," 450-452.

62 ST III.62.1 cor, ad 2.

63 ST III.62.3 cor, ad 3.

64 Cf Daniel A Keating, "Justification, Sanctification and Divinization in Thomas Aquinas," in *Aquinas on Doctrine: A Critical Introduction*, ed. Thomas Weinandy, Daniel Keating and John Yocum (London: T & T Clark, 2004), 153-154.

recipient, the transformation itself witnessing to the power and even the fecundity of God. The transformed soul, under the impulse of the *hau* which always belongs to its source, seeks to honour God in an appropriate way, and the spiral of gratitude comes into being. To go one stage further, as *hau* in general belongs both to the giver and to the gift object, but primarily to the giver, so the Holy *Hau* proceeds principally from the Father, the Giver, but also from the Son, the gift object.[65]

5.2 Corroboration from biblical commentaries

5.2.1 Distinction between the gift object and the spirit of the gift

We can corroborate this claim by showing that this constellation of ideas is present in discussions on grace in the scriptural commentaries, particularly the later ones. We have already seen observed the link between *gratia* as favour and *gratia* as gratitude. We could also note the use of *beneficium*. Despites its rare occurrence in the Vulgate,[66] Thomas uses the word very often in his biblical commentaries. It frequently occurs in the context of the thanksgiving passages at the beginning of Paul's letters, as Thomas explains the reasons for which Paul gives thanks. Similarly, when there is an exhortation to gratitude, Thomas will often use the word *beneficium* to describe the grounds for gratitude. Although Seneca's name is invoked only once with respect to gratitude,[67] one would expect that the understanding of benefits and gratitude that found expression in *De Beneficiis*, and which Thomas - along with his contemporaries - so willingly embraces, lies

[65] ST I.36.3 ad 2, in the sense that the Holy Spirit has the capacity to be given as the Spirit of the Gift because the Son has the capacity to be given as the gift object.

[66] *Beneficium* is found only at Judges 9:16, 1 Para 17:26, 2 Para 32:25, Tob 11:19,12:2, Eccli 29:9, 1 Mac 11:53, 2 Mac 6:13, 8:20, 9:26, 1 Tim 6:2, and *beneficus* at Luke 22:25, *beneficientia* at Heb 13:16. *Benefacere* occurs about 40 times. Vulgate Concordance, http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/efts/ARTFL/public/bibles/vulgate.search.html (accessed 9th January 2012).

[67] *Super I Corinthios* 12.1 (M710), as cited above.

behind these terms.

We also find the distinction between the gift object and the spirit of the gift very clearly in the commentary on Titus.

> It should be known that grace implies mercy, because grace is about that which is given *gratis*, and that is given mercifully which is given with grace. . . . And it can be said that in the birth of Christ this grace appeared in a twofold way. First and foremost, because he was given to us through the very great grace (*per maximam gratiam*) of God. Whence his conception, even though it is the work of the whole Trinity, is attributed to the Holy Spirit, who is the *principium gratiarum*. And this grace appeared to all people, especially to Christ in his humanity. (John 1: 14 *Full of grace and truth*.) From this grace, in the second place, the instruction of the human race is achieved.[68]

What we have here is an application of Thomas' explanation of why "Gift" is a personal name of the Holy Spirit. It is not that the Son cannot be or is not given, but that the love which is the Holy Spirit, in which the Son is given to us, makes a gift of our ability to "use and enjoy" the Son who comes from the Father.[69]

Beyond this, there are comments on two passages where the whole constellation of ideas can be found. The first, based on a Hebrews text, brings the ideas together very clearly. The second, based on a verse from the Johannine last supper discourse, is not quite as clear, but points to some issues to be raised in the second half of the thesis.

5.2.2 The principal conclusion of the Letter to the Hebrews

We shall begin with Thomas' comments on Heb 12:26, "Therefore, receiving an unshakable kingdom, we have *gratiam*, through which let us serve God pleasing [him], with fear and reverence," which Thomas considers as the "principal conclusion," the "conclusion principally intended" of the whole letter.[70] The

[68] *Super Titum* cap. 2, lect. 3 (M68).
[69] ST I.38.2.
[70] *Super Hebraeos*, cap. 12, lect. 5 (M722-724, cf M713)

"unshakable" kingdom refers to what is promised in the New Testament as distinct from the Old, and on this basis we "have *gratiam*." Thomas gives two interpretations of this: we give thanks (*reddimus gratiarum actionem* – note that this is a statement, not an exhortation), or (*vel* - the alternatives are not exclusive) we have the gift of grace (*donum gratiae*). The gift of grace comes from the hope of what is promised but which is not yet received; the gift of grace is thus not the ultimate gift, and is not really the gift object, but can be taken as the "pledge" (which in Thomas refers to the Holy Spirit), an inchoation of glory. Thus hope gives grace through which we arrive.

Then noting that "natural reason" (an allusion to Seneca?) dictates giving reverence and honour to a generous benefactor, Thomas argues that this applies *a fortiori* to God, who has given us very great things, and who has promised infinite things. We do not give thanks for the grace, but *per istam gratiam*, which is *nobis datam et dandam* - presumably this means now in the earthly liturgy and then in the heavenly. Through the grace we serve God "pleasing" him, that is, not merely through exterior action, but "through right intention and love." Thus the grace, which is not the gift object, but what we might call the "spirit" of the anticipated gift - although Thomas himself explains it in terms of the fire imagery of the next verse - changes us inwardly so that we can serve God in a pleasing way.

Finally, Thomas backs up the exhortation when he comments on the next verse, "For our God is a consuming fire."[71] Thomas considers that fire is used to describe God here on account of its brightness (*claritas*), activity, loftiness, and its purgative and consumptive qualities. Allowing ourselves some connections typical of Thomas, loftiness and *claritas* suggest glory (*clara cum laude notitia*); fire's activity reminds us of its place in the hierarchy of circular beings, being able to

[71] *Super Hebraeos* 12.5 (M725)

generate fire in other matter by consuming it. This consumption is seen in positive terms (God purges sin, which Thomas elsewhere describes in terms of removing the *macula peccati* and thus restoring brightness, making the sinner like God[72]) and in negative terms (consuming sinners in punishment). Once again, we have a set of *hau*-like qualities. Not surprisingly, then, Thomas thinks of this fire as present in us, mainly as the promised reality of future glory, but also as present power, for Thomas' scriptural quote for God's activity is Is 26:12, which talks of God's works in us.

5.2.3 John's Gospel and Christ's abiding presence among us

Unlike the commentaries on the Pauline corpus, which were probably produced in Naples in 1272-1273, the commentary on John was written in Paris at roughly the same time as *Prima Secundae* (1270-1272), and thus reflects Thomas' understanding as he was writing the tract on grace.[73] The most relevant passage is on 15:9-17, and Thomas begins his comments by saying "that we remain in Christ is from his *gratia*; and this *gratia* is the effect of love. . . . From which it is clear that all our good works come to us from the *beneficium* of divine love," for good works come from love, and we would not love unless we had first been loved.[74] He concludes by citing John Chrysostom: "The disciples could have said: Lord, why do you remind us so much about your love? You're not reproaching us, are you? But the Lord says: No, but rather so as to incite you to love of neighbour."[75] As that which makes our good works good, *gratia* here clearly refers to grace in its strict theological sense. And yet, that they come *ex gratia* is paralleled with coming *ex*

[72] ST I-II.86, III.79.4 cor, ad 1.
[73] Torrell OP, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 1:146-147, 250-257.
[74] *Super Ioannem* cap. 15, lect. 2, (M1998)
[75] *Super Ioannem* cap. 15, lect. 3 (M2029).

beneficio, so *gratia* here also refers to the favour with which a benefit is bestowed. And the good works flow out of us as gratitude, because being mindful of the benefit is the foundation of gratitude. And yet what is done out of gratitude (*gratia*) is also done out of grace (*gratia*), precisely because Christ is *not* reproaching them, is not inducing them to act out of some fear of punishment (as the Old Law did), but out of love, according to the New Law of grace.

Indeed, Thomas says that the introductory verse for this section, 15:9: "Just as the Father has loved me, I also have loved you: remain in my love," has as its structure a commemoration of the benefit conferred on the disciples, followed by an exhortation to perseverance. The commemoration of the benefit is by a comparison, a *similitudo gratiae et dilectionis*: we have received from the Son a benefit, a favour in love, similar to the one the Son receives from the Father. Similar, but not the same, for according to his divinity Christ is God *per naturam*, and according to his humanity by the unity of person, but we are gods *per participationem gratiae* (a phrase that we shall explain shortly), which Thomas links to the "great and precious promises God has given to us, to be made sharers of the divine nature" (2 Pet 1:4). Again, there is a "similarity of affect:" "whoever adheres to God is one spirit" (1 Cor 6:17), and "those whom he foreknew to become conformed to the image of the Son" (Rom 8:29) - once again we have in all its aspects the *hau*-like spirit of the gift.[76]

Thomas offers two readings of the exhortation to perseverance - to keep loving Christ on account of the great benefit, or to keep being loved by Christ, not to fall out of his favour and fail to receive the good things he has promised, to remain

[76] These themes will recur a little later when he comments on the "spirit of truth" of John 15:27 at *Super Ioannem* cap. 15, lect. 5 (M2602).

faithful to our vocation - and he prefers the second. Thus we have here a line of interpretation focussed on the gift object: the Son in his divinity is the recipient of the gift of the divine nature, and we are given a similar gift, although at this stage only as promise, and we ought be grateful for it always; further, the Son shares in the Spirit of God (Thomas is insistent on *Filioque*), and we also have the Spirit in which the sharing in the divine nature is promised to us, and we are exhorted to remain in that Spirit, which is the very favour or love with which Christ loves us.

Thomas then, following the text, goes on to talk about keeping the commandments, which relies upon God's love of us, i.e., cannot be done except through grace.

Judging from the structure, then, the "participation of grace" is linked to the present state of promise (grace as opposed to glory), a state of a vocation to something greater, and is some sort of gift-object *(gratia* in its second sense). What this gift-object is I shall leave to the second half of the thesis which, following the structure of the *Summa*, discusses gift objects, but it may be that Thomas does not mention it because the Gospel text itself is silent - that conspicuous absence of an explicit reference to the Eucharist in five chapters devoted to the Last Supper.

5.3 Why is this overlooked?

If this understanding of grace is so pervasively present in Thomas, I need to offer some explanation as to why other commentators have not mentioned it. In one sense the connection is noticed: writers on the virtue of gratitude find themselves waxing lyrical in terms strongly reminiscent of grace talk;[77] it is speaking of grace in

[77] J-D Folghera OP, for instance, notes that it makes religion personal. "Notes explicatives" Appendix I in Thomas Aquinas, *Somme Théologique: Les Vertus Sociales 2a-2ae, Questions 101-122*, Éditions de la Revue des Jeunes, tr. J-D Folghera OP (Paris: Desclée, 1931), 410. Dominicus

terms of gratitude that is lacking.

One reason would be that Thomas does not always draw attention to the developments in his thought. As a parallel case, he never explicitly states that he has changed his mind on the effective rather than dispositive instrumental causality of the sacraments and, as the early Thomists were part of the tradition that used Peter Lombard's *Sentences* as their primary textbook and so read Thomas through the *Scriptum*, there was for a long time a current within Thomism that either did not notice or denied this change.[78]

I suspect that even if people were to notice the indicators, they would not have known how to incorporate them into a theory of grace. Stephen Duffy's treatment of grace in Paul is an interesting parallel. He notes that Paul repeatedly uses *charis* to mean thanksgiving, but takes this as an indicator that he "has no eye for theological consistency." "One cannot pin down Paul's meaning in some philosophical category, whether Aristotelian (e.g., *habitus*) or existential (event, action, situation)," and so to "grasp Paul's use of "grace" one must with imaginative sympathy reenact an experience rather than analyze a concept."[79] When he does this, Duffy realises that grace is not one gift-object among many, but a " second-order concept" close to what we call the "spirit of the gift," but any reference to gratitude has vanished.[80] It is very easy for a Catholic theologian to write on grace without mentioning gratitude.[81]

Prümmer holds that gratitude is a "necessary and at the same time beautiful virtue, which fosters charity and unites the hearts of people." *Manuale theologiae moralis secundum principia S. Thomae Aquinatis in usum scholarum*, ed. 11, updated by P. Dr. Engelberto M. Münich OP (Friburg in Breisgau: Herder, 1953), 2:476.

78 Lavaud notes that Cajetan was the first to note this changes, and Capreolus and Sylvester of Ferrara stuck with the old position, basing themselves on statements in the *Scriptum*. "Saint Thomas et la causalité physique," 306-316.

79 Stephen Duffy, *The Dynamism of Grace: Perspectives in Theological Anthropology* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1993), 24, 33.

80 Stephen Duffy, *Dynamism*, 40.

81 For example: Bernard J. F. Lonergan S.J. , *Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought*

Interestingly, the theme does occur when people look at certain other late mediaeval sources. The connection between grace and gratitude has been argued in studies of people as different as John Calvin[82] and Ignatius Loyola.[83]

The fact that the question is not even addressed means that one can only guess at the reasons, but I suspect that one of them is that the linking of gratitude to sanctifying grace would make the doctrine of the efficacy of infant baptism problematic. We can take two ideas from the *Summa* to respond to this. Thomas finds unsatisfactory the idea that, for infants, baptism simply confers character (the gift object), and argues that it confers grace and virtues, but merely as a habitus, and not *in actu*.[84] Secondly, grace begins to be in the subject when the subject begins to be in act according to grace, (and of course *gratia in actu* is almost the same thing as thanksgiving, *gratiarum actio*).[85] Whatever is present in the infant's soul beyond the gift-object (which at least includes the "debt"), it is by no means grace in the proper sense of the word. One cannot develop a theology of grace so that the primary referent of the word applies to what is conferred on infants at baptism: rather, one must develop a theology of grace and then work out in what secondary sense infants can be said to receive it: Chauvet's remarks on this point are totally apposite.[86]

Chauvet holds this because he knows that gratitude is inseparable from

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of St. Thomas Aquinas (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1971); Neil Ormerod, *Creation, Grace, and Redemption* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis, 2007); Henri Rondet SJ, *The Grace of Christ: A Brief History of the Theology of Grace*, tr. and ed. Tad Guzie (Westminster MD: Newman Press, 1967); Edward Yarnold SJ, *The Second Gift: A Study of Grace* (Slough: St Paul, 1974). On the other hand, some reflection on gratitude and grace (without it becoming a major theme) can be found in Leonardo Boff, *Liberating Grace*, tr. John Drury (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1979), 46-48; 192.

82 Gerrish, *Grace and Gratitude,* 43-44, and 69-70, where Gerrish compares Calvin to Thomas on the meaning of *gratia*. Calvin agreed with "the sounder Schoolmen" on justification, but not on merit (97-98), and had a strong interest in Seneca (39-40).

83 Wilkie Au, "Ignatian Service: Gratitude and Love in Action," *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits* 40.2 (Summer 2008): 1-32.

84 ST III.69.6 cor.

85 ST I-II.110.2 ad 3.

86 Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 109.

grace, although, as I shall explain later, I consider that he fails to carry through consistently with this insight. Earlier than Chauvet, Bernard Häring made the connection between grace and gratitude central to his book on the sacraments.[87] Both these theologians respected Thomas but saw themselves as moving beyond him: had they been aware that Thomas had made a connection between grace and gratitude, they would have used it to lend authority to their theological forays; I strongly suspect that the interpretations of Thomas they had received discouraged them from even looking for it.

5.4 Grace, promise, and covenant love

5.4.1 Sharing the divine nature

I want briefly to return to the quote, "the great and precious promises God has given to us, to be made sharers of the divine nature." Thomas refers to being sharers of the divine nature, or sharing in the divine nature, at least 22 times in his works, on eighteen occasions citing 2 Peter as his source, and normally quoting part or all of the text. Compared with a single, unacknowledged use in the *Scriptum*, twelve of these uses are in the *Summa*, with three in the tract on grace.[88] Further, on eight occasions the cited text included the phrases "great and precious promises," and on one other occasion the phrase was not given but *pretium* was referred to. Our sharing in the divine nature, so important for Thomas, is not something given but something promised. At one level this does not matter: the spirit of a promise is essentially the spirit of the gift, and, as noted earlier, can similarly evoke gratitude. In fact, as we saw earlier, it is on the basis of the as yet imperfect sharing in the

[87] Häring, *Sacraments*, 97-98 *et passim*.
[88] Cf Keating, "Justification," 153-154.

divine nature, potential rather than actual, that we are able to love God with charity. For any love is based upon a likeness, upon something shared, and this is the criterion for the difference between purely natural love for God (based upon the likeness of God present in us as our origin and goal) and charity (based upon shared beatitude). Also the things promised are *magna et pretiosa*: charity is love of things *magni pretii* (of great price or value).[89]

But at another level it is significant. It means that any gift object we receive in this present life is essentially a sign, because it brings to mind a reality that is not present. We are led back to Caillé's insistence that gift objects are essentially symbols, that what matters is not so much the gift exchanged, but the bonds created.

Now the nature of these gifts as promises and signs leads us to the issue of the trustworthiness of the promises, the truth of the signs. In particular, we are led to a reality referred to by Thomas using three words, more or less equivalent: *foedus, pactum*, and *testamentum*.[90] The words are all used frequently by Thomas, often in a secular sense, or else in scriptural or other quotations.[91] Thomas notices that *testamentum* is linked to *testis*.[92] *Testamentum* refers to *testata veritas*, or more specifically the manifestation and "certification" of the divine mind - what God wills - and *testimonium* is anything taken from something outside for the purpose of establishing faith..[93] *Testamentum* - and thus also *foedus* and *pactum* - have an essentially public character, one mediated by signs, or, to use Caillé's terminology,

[89] ST I-II.26.3 cor.

[90] *Super Galatas* 4.8 (M256).

[91] According to the *Index Thomisticus*, in the genuine works of Thomas *foedus* occurs 160 times (although this also includes a few cases of the unrelated adjective *foedus, -a, -um*), *pactum* 256 times, and *testamentum* 1463 times, very often with regard to the Old or New Testament.

[92] *In Psalmos* 24.8.

[93] *In Psalmos* 24.8. The text actually says "testimonium dicitur quasi testata veritas," but one could argue that it should be *testamentum* on the grounds that: the text cited to support this usage contains the word *testamentum*; *testamentum* is closer to "testata veritas" than *testimonium*; this is the third of five definitions of *testamentum* taken from scripture or the Fathers. The Leonine Commission is yet to produce a critical text.

symbols.

Thomas is also clear that a covenant substantially involves a promise, and in such a way that different promises make for different covenants.[94] He also notes that the breaking of a covenant can be ingratitude.[95] Charity will thus be based on a covenant, and although the term did not exist in Thomas' time, it would be fair to say that for him *caritas* could be described as "covenant love."

5.4.2 The truth of grace

Our question, then, is how we know that the covenant is true. This is the point where we can no longer postpone serious investigation of gift-objects, and in particular the gift-object that is the incarnate Word and its extension into the sacraments. But before we do we should conclude this first half of the thesis by returning to the beginning and looking once more at truth.

Truth, we saw, was in the divine mind, in the human mind and, in a transferred sense, in things, insofar as they reflect the divine mind (which they always do) or as they lead to truth in the human mind. These three sorts of truth are opposed, respectively, to participation, error, and the figure. We also saw that they are linked with the three forms of the grace of Christ: the grace of union, by which Christ is truly divine; the habitual grace of Christ, by which he possesses all virtues; and the capital grace of Christ, by which he communicates grace to others.

Having explored at length the threefold meaning of the word *gratia*, we could include the grace we experience in this threefold schema. The favour we experience from God must be true - it must be a desire for God to communicate

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[94] *Super Galatas* 4.8 (M256).
[95] *Super Hebraeos* 10.3 (M52-531).

himself in his essence, not simply some created thing that participates in his goodness. The gratitude we feel and through which we recompense and glorify God must also be true, free from error: grace must fill our souls with true virtues. And the gift object must be true, enabling the change to take place from a false economy, directed to material goods and based on fear, to a true economy based on spiritual reward and love. And this, of course, could be connected to the threefold liberation that truth brings; from corruption, from error, and from slavery to the sin and to the law. This triple liberation gives the structure to consider God's gift to us in Christ and his sacraments.

CHAPTER SIX

CHRIST AS SOURCE AND MODEL OF GRACE

The first in any genus is the cause of the others in that genus, and the grace of Christ is the cause of grace in us.[1] Thus Thomas, after considering the hypostatic union itself, considers the grace of Christ among the "coassumpta" of the union (that is, the perfections and defects), his merit among the consequences of the union, and then the mysteries of the life of Christ, and only then goes on to consider the sacraments, by which we share in Christ's grace. In this chapter we shall start with the grace of Christ. An investigation of merit will require looking at its placement among the consequences of the union, for this placement is an innovation for Thomas;[2] significantly, in discussing the consequences, Thomas is also looking at what we might term the "subjectivity" of Jesus, which, we shall see, is intrinsically constituted by his relations to God and to us. This will involve looking also at his priesthood and the extension of the visible mission into things such as his clothes. As I shall argue, Thomas' favourite proof text for being incorporated into Christ (Galatians 3:27) uses the image of clothing, and so, considering clothing within the mysteries of Christ, I shall investigate how we become members of Christ's body through baptism; this will then be compared with what Thomas says directly about baptismal character.

Baptism is ordered towards the Eucharist, which will be topic of chapter seven, and there we shall see in greater depth the saving significance of Christ's passion. Chapter eight can then give a general theory of sacramental efficacy, and,

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1 This principle of causality is found most explicitly at *De Veritate* 5.9 sed contra 3.

2 Lafont, *Structures*, 391.

after discussing the cases where sacraments and grace are separated, will then consider the strengths and weaknesses of Chauvet's appraisal of the sacramental theology of Thomas.

6.1 The grace of Christ

6.1.1 Christ grace in its threefold fulness: favour, gift and thanksgiving

As we saw in chapter two, Thomas uses the standard terms grace of union, habitual grace and capital grace to talk of the grace of Christ. We can use texts from Thomas to relate these to the favour, the gift object and gratitude. A good place to start is this distinction:

> In this way therefore it should be said that if grace is taken as the actual will of God doing something *gratis*, or holding someone *gratum* or accepted, the union of the incarnation came about through grace just as the union of the saints to God through knowledge and love. If, however, grace is meant as the gratuitous gift of God itself, then that very thing which is that the human nature is united to the divine Person can be called a certain grace, in that this took place without any preceding merits.[3]

The gift object, therefore, is the fact of the hypostatic union. Through it God expresses his undeserved favour towards the human nature of Christ;[4] nor is it received as a gift without some quality in Christ's soul which is the result of God's favour and renders the soul capable of delighting in the gift object and acting in accord with the favour expressed by it. This quality arises from God's giving and the human nature's reception at the level of being, and in no way enables, merits or mediates that reception. This is the habitual grace of Christ.[5]

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3 ST III.2.10 cor., cf. ST III.6.6 cor. Thomas also discusses the predestination of Christ, ST III.24.

4 Cf Colman O'Neill, "Appendix 5: The Priesthood of Christ: 3a. 22," in Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, vol. 50 *The One Mediator 3a. 16-26*, ed. Colman O'Neill (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1965), 248.

5 ST III.2.10 cor, 7.1, cf *De Veritate* 29.1-2. At 29.2 cor Thomas says the habitual grace "is more *finis* of the assumption than a disposition towards the assumption [of the human nature]."

As with the rest of humanity, this habitual grace is an invisible mission of the Holy Spirit: indeed, as the procession of the Son is naturally (but not temporally) prior to the procession of the Holy Spirit, so the grace of union (which corresponds to the mission of the Son) is naturally (but not temporally) prior to the habitual grace of Christ (the mission of the Holy Spirit).[6] Thus Thomas' remark that, like light in the air from the presence of the sun, grace in human beings is caused by the presence of divinity, applies first and foremost to Christ.[7] In his case the presence is the union of the human nature to the divine person—and, in the order of nature but not temporally, the soul is united to the Word and then, through the soul, to the body.[8] Because the human nature of Christ does not exist before being united to the Word this is not an invisible but a visible mission of the Word: visible for the sake of fallen humans who go from knowledge of visible things to knowledge of invisible things.[9]

6.1.2 The connections between these three modes

Now, Christ also has capital grace, in other words, his grace overflows into others. It is precisely in this overflow that we have the third sense of grace, grace as thanksgiving, for thanksgiving must acknowledge not only the gift object, but the gratutity with which it is given. The connection will become clearer when we consider the merit of Christ, but first we need to look at the unity of these three referents of the word "grace."

There seems to be no difference in essence between habitual grace and capital grace, and indeed, if *everything* that Christ did and suffered in the flesh is for our

6 ST III.7.13 cor, cf. ST I.27.3 ad 3.
7 ST III.7.13 cor.
8 ST III.6.1 cor.
9 ST I.43.7 cor.

salvation, then every action that results from the habitual grace in some way overflows to others.[10] This identity is supported when we consider the lists of reasons for positing habitual grace in Christ and for the qualities of that grace that make it appropriate to call Christ "head:"

- it was *conveniens* for one so close to the source of grace to be graced, and Christ is head according to closeness to God because his grace is higher and prior (not temporally), and all others receive grace with respect to him, (just as a natural head is at the top);
- the human soul of Christ needs to be elevated to know and love God as closely as possible, and Christ is head according to perfection, because he has the fulness of all graces (all the senses are found in the natural head);
- in his humanity he is mediator between God and humanity, "and so he should have grace redounding to others," and Christ is head according to power, because he has the power of producing an influx of grace (*influendi gratiam*) into all members of the Church (the power, movement and government of all the other members have their origin in the head).[11]

On the other hand, Thomas distinguishes the habitual grace from the grace of union, even saying that they are not of the same genus, because the grace of union, like the divine person himself, is beyond any genus.[12] Moreover, towards the end of the discussion of the grace of Christ, one of the objections is based on the difference between the "singular grace of Christ" and "the grace of union."[13] An explanation is given in the response to this objection, where he remarks that Christ's capital grace

[10] For the salvific value of "omnes actiones et passiones Christi" see ST III.48.6 cor.
[11] ST III.7.1 cor, III.8.1 cor.
[12] ST III.7.13 ad 3.
[13] ST III.8.5 obj. 3.

and his personal grace are ordered towards acts, and so they "conveniunt in essentia habitus", which is not the case with the grace of union. Having distinguished, Thomas can now show the connection:

> However, the personal grace could in a certain way be called the grace of union, insofar as it produces a certain congruity to the union. And in this regard the grace of union and the capital grace and the grace of the singular person are one through essence, but differ *sola ratione*.[14]

Or as he said earlier, "one and the same grace" is the habitual grace of Christ, which can be considered as grace "of union, in that it is congruous to nature united to the divinity; of the head, in that through it there is an overflow to others for salvation; and of the singular person, in that it perfected [him to perform] meritorious works."[15] The point is that no other gift needs to be given to Christ so that he can carry out all that is necessary for our salvation. The word *gratia* expresses the profound unity between the divine favour elevating the humanity, the gift object, and the thanksgiving; moreover, it is by the same grace that both Christ himself is graced and he graces us.

6.1.3 The excess of Christ's grace

The grace of Christ overflows from the head into the members, but Thomas is quite clear that this is a metaphor, a description after the fact rather than an explanation of how it happens.[16] We would expect that grace would flow into us by means some gift, something connected with the "graces" that Christ has in abundance, or something that can produce a divine mission in us. Our entry into these questions, as we hinted earlier, is through that issue of merit.

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[14] ST III.8.5 ad 3.
[15] *De Veritate* 29.5 cor.
[16] Catão considers this distinction "très important." *Salut et rédemption* , 101.

As we have seen, the excess that is shown in gratitude is recognised by God, who, in his own good time, pours more grace into the soul in a potentially infinite spiral which, *pace* Aristotle, is not vicious because it is founded on charity. Now, the potentially infinite spiral ends at death; after death people move from grace to glory, for grace is merely the preparation for glory, and *in patria* each participates in glory according to the measure of charity *in via*, and charity of course comes only by grace. Because glory arises from a complete possession of God (*totus sed non totaliter*), and each person sees the beatific vision according to the maximum of his or her capacity, there is no growth in glory, nor any possibility of merit: nor is there any time in which growth could take place.[17]

But Christ's grace stops growing as soon as it starts, for even as pilgrim (*viator*) in his earthly life he is already *comprehensor* and enjoys the beatific vision. Although grace can perform greater works in Christ as he increases in age (thereby explaining Luke 2:52), Thomas insists that grace in Christ can increase neither in terms of its subject nor in terms of its form:[18] in terms of its form, because "the end of grace is the union of rational creature to God," and no union greater than the one taking place in the divine Person is possible; in terms of its subject, because Christ is always already *comprehensor*, and so has already achieved the goal of grace at the first moment of his conception.[19] Similarly in Christ there is no growth in charity.[20] What happens, then, when the personal grace of Christ, which is a *habitus*, is raised from potency to an act of charity? How is this supremely eminent act acknowledged by God?

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17 ST I.12.7 obj 3, I-II.65.5 cor, II-II.24.7.
18 ST III.7.12 cor, ad 3.
19 ST III.7.12 cor. In the previous two articles Thomas has explained how Christ enjoys the fulness of grace.
20 ST III.48.1 obj 3 and ad 3.

The question is equivalent to the one of whether Christ can merit, one which Thomas treats explicitly.[21] But his answers need to be considered in the context in which he places them.

6.2 Christ's human subjectivity and his mystical body

There is no question in the *Summa* on the merit of Christ; rather, there are two articles on merit at the conclusion of a question on the operation of Christ. This question comes in a tract which Thomas titles the consequences of the [hypostatic] union, and which he divides into: first, those pertaining to Christ himself; secondly, those pertaining to him *vis-à-vis* the Father (further subdivided into his way of being towards the Father and the Father's towards him); thirdly, those pertaining to Christ *vis-à-vis* us. A number of scholars have found this tract puzzling, because it contains, in the section on Christ with regard to the Father, a question on Christ's priesthood (an innovation in scholastic theology) and, in the section on Christ and us, a question on his mediatorship, and yet Thomas sees priesthood precisely in terms of mediatorship.[22] Moreover, as mediatorship is the more general category, it is against Thomas' normal method that it should come later.

The first question of the tract on the consequences of the union is about its "grammar," how to speak truthfully of the one person and the two natures, and this concern runs right through the tract, as Thomas seeks to delineate a "space" for each of them.[23] The focus of our investigation will be the ways in which this "space"

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21 ST III.19.3-4.

22 Gérard Remy, "Sacerdoce et médiation chez saint Thomas," *Revue Thomiste* 99.1 (1999):104; Jean-Pierre Torrell, "Le sacerdoce du Christ dans la *Somme de théologie*," *Revue Thomiste* 99.1 (1999): 76-78

23 L.-B. Gillon OP holds that "consequi" here means to follow logically, rather than by some sort of fittingness, as with the "coassumpta" of qq. 7-15, "La notion de conséquence de l'union hypostatique dans le cadre de III[a], qq. 2-16," *Angelicum* 15 (1938): 32-34. This view is accepted by Colman O'Neill,"Introduction," in Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, vol. 50 *The One*

overflows the natural body of Christ. Thomas has terms for this overflow, such as *persona mystica* and *corpus mysticum*, and in one case where he has no name I would suggest that it might best be described as an "extension of the visible mission." What is also significant is that the three questions about Christ *vis-à-vis* the Father - his subjection, prayer and priesthood - are about how the Word incarnate practises the acts of religion.[24] We considered earlier Maxime Allard's analysis of these acts and their role in developing subjectivity, which he takes as not automatically present, but rather in need of being constructed. Subjectivity in this sense provides a useful way of considering the *persona mystica*, and the corporeal nature of the extensions of the visible mission helps to place it all in a wider context.

As was the case with "head" and "members" above, *persona* here is metaphorical: François Daguet has argued on the basis of a close examination of the texts that the definition of person Thomas takes from Boethius ("individual substance of a rational nature") cannot apply to the *persona* always qualified as *mystica* or *quasi (una)*.[25]

Thus this tract gives an account of the construction of this subjectivity, this *persona mystica*.[26] Wherever here, or elsewhere, an appeal is made to the mystical body or person, we should look also to see how Thomas is accounting for its

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Mediator 3a. 16-26 (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1965), xxv-xxvii, and Torrell, "Le sacerdoce du Christ," 77-78.

[24] Lafont sees these three questions as a replication of II-II.82-85. See *Structures*, 391-392, cf 353-354. Colman O'Neill notes this explictly with regard to Christ's priesthood, and then links it back to his subjection to the Father. "Appendix 5: The Priesthood of Christ: 3a. 22," in Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, vol. 50 *The One Mediator 3a. 16-26* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1965), 245-246, 248.

[25] ST I.29.1; Daguet, *Théologie du dessein*, 410-415. However, Daguet then says that, as the body of Christ has one soul through the Holy Spirit, who is the same in all, its unity and its quasi-personality is not the merely juridical unity of a multitude with a common goal. Martin Morard also insists that the "quasi-personal unity of Christ and the Church is not the unity of a supposit." "Les expressions '*corpus mysticum*' et '*persona mystica*' dans l'œuvre de saint Thomas d'Aquin," *Revue Thomiste* 95 (1995): 662.

[26] *Pace* Lafont, who can see no theologically important reason as to why Thomas has moved merit from its place within the grace of Christ, where his predecessors considered it. *Structures*, 391.

construction, particularly where the term *persona mystica* first makes its appearance, in the articles on merit, which we shall now examine in detail, followed by the questions on priesthood and adoration.

6.2.1 Christ's merit

6.2.1.1 For whom does Christ merit?

The first four questions - the "grammar" of the union, Christ's one *esse*, his dual will and his dual operation - create the space for and culminate in his merit, and with it the *persona mystica*. Once it has been established that Christ has a genuinely human operation, the first of the two articles on the merit of Christ asks whether he can merit for himself. Taking his cue from Phil 2:8 which he uses in the *sed contra*, Thomas holds that, although the glory of his body was due to Christ on account of his dignity as Son of God, it was something whose absence during his earthly life was more than compensated for by his having it in his risen life by merit.[27] Having argued that at least one thing could be merited, he then deals with the objection that the manifestation of the excellence of Christ is not a good for Christ himself, but for those who know him. True, it benefits them more than Christ himself, but it does benefit Christ ("according to the *esse* which he has in the knowledge of others," presumably drawing upon the idea that the known exists somehow in the knower). Besides, Thomas says that even if the benefit is chiefly for "the good of those who know him according to the *esse* which they have in themselves," this good "is referred (*refertur*) to Christ insofar as they are his members."[28]

[27] ST III.19.3 cor.
[28] ST III.19.3 ad 4.

The presumption here is that Christ all through his life enjoys the beatific vision in his interior life, and that the only purpose that exists in his exterior life is to benefit others by letting his glory be known to them.[29] The only reward Christ has is for others to grow closer to God. I doubt that those who coined the description of Jesus as the "man for others" meant it anywhere as near as radically as Thomas would have understood the phrase. The human subject Christ merits, but only when we understand the boundaries of this "subject."[30]

The corpus of the next article ("Whether Christ can merit for others") effectively says that, because of the whole arrangement called "the body of Christ", it really is merit that produces these effects in us: there is no substantial advance over the previous article. The real point of the article lies in the objections, where, to reconcile merit and grace, Thomas teases out how the body is constructed (*constitutum*).

6.2.1.2 The gift of membership of the body as a grace in itself

The first objection cites Ezekiel's claim that each soul is punished for its own sin, and by equal reasoning, a soul can only merit for itself. Thomas responds to this with a counter-example: because Adam has been established (*constitutus*) by God as *principium totius naturae*, his sin is passed on to others through propagation, and similarly Christ is *constitutus* head of all people with regard to grace, and thus

[29] For, as we have seen, it is the possibility of merit that gives purpose to these actions. 3.1.2.1.

[30] Colman O'Neill elaborates what it means that Christ's human nature only exists in the act of existence of the Person of the Word, arguing that it "gives a new dimension, a new qualification, to the person's unique substantial existence." "Appendix 2: Unity of existence in Christ: 3a. 17.2," in Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, vol. 50 *The One Mediator 3a. 16-26* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1965), 226. It would seem that Christ's human subjectivity is a further dimension of the divine person. However, O'Neill does not consider this; nor even, when examining Christ's human consciousness in appendix 3 (229-237) does he ask how Christ is conscious of this connection with the rest of humanity.

his merit extends to all. The main point is that the flow of merit is according to an order established by God, as Thomas maintained in the question on merit.[31]

The second objection reminds us that other human beings share in the grace of Christ, but in a particular way, not in his grace as source of grace - in other words, as God has established his *ordo*, Christ's headship is something singular and unshared.

The third objection is two-fold: first, if salvation is merited, it comes as owed in justice and not given in grace; secondly, therefore, as Christ died for all, God is unjust if he does not extend salvation to all. The first part of the objection would hold if the "body of Christ" were a naturally given entity, like a human body, comprising the whole human race. But Thomas responds to the second part of the objection first, picking up the Adam parallel: original sin is passed on through carnal generation and Christ's merit through spiritual regeneration; spiritual regeneration requires something extra, baptism, and so we can conclude that salvation is not owed to all.[32] Thomas then moves to the first part of the objection and argues that our very regeneration in Christ is granted (*conceditur*), and so it, and thus salvation, is of grace.

Thus this *persona mystica* which is the subject of Christ's outward human actions and the recipient of the reward for those actions is not a *persona* in the strict sense, and definitely not an "individual substance of a rational nature." Just as the idea of merit was extended in the first article, here the idea of *persona* is given a

[31] But this order is not something merely extrinsic to the actors involved. Daguet, *Théologie du dessein*, 412.

[32] For the parallel between Christ and Adam, see Daguet, *Théologie du dessein*, 271-279. While it is true that Adam transmits (or fails to transmit) grace by handing on the nature, it should not be overlooked that the transmission of human nature happens voluntarily, and it is the voluntary nature of that transmission that allows it to be affected by sin (at least *in habitu*) and thus to fail to hand on grace. ST I-II.81.3 ad 2; I-II.82.4 ad 3, cf *De malo*, 4.6 ad 16. Adam's headship of the human race is still constructed.

"mystical" but proportionate extension, so that an analogy exists between the standard use and the extended use.[33] Just as Allard notes that in Roman law the relation tends to go from the act to the agent, so too Thomas extends merit and then extends *persona*.[34] The extension of merit constructs this *persona mystica*, but this happens by the divine ordering, by Christ's human will, by our responses - and through the sacrament of baptism. As baptismal character is a sharing in the priesthood of Christ, that priesthood now claims our attention.

6.2.2 The priesthood of Christ

6.2.2.1 Priesthood as mediatory

Thomas sees the priest above all as a mediator between God and the people (*populus*), and as a *populus* is by definition ordered, priesthood implies some place in an order.[35] This mediatorship works in both directions: the priest hands on divine things to the people, and "offers the prayers of the people to God, and in some fashion (*aliqualiter*) satisfies for their sins to God."[36] Thomas finds most of this understanding of priesthood in Heb 5:1, which talks of offering gifts and sacrifices for sin;[37] this verse also grounds the generally held insistence that the priest must be

[33] According to the analysis of the types of analogy Thomas refers to, this would be a proper analogy, not of proportion, but of proportionality. Angela Monachese, "Identità e classificazioni dell'analogia: analisi strutturale dei testi di Tommaso d'Aquino," *Salesianum* 72 (2010): 232.

[34] Morard notes that *persona* tends to be used in dynamic contexts to express the unity of an action, and it seems that Thomas, initially suspicious of the phrase when composing the *Scriptum*, became more comfortable in *De Veritate*, and used it most happily after the *Summa* in his expositions of the Psalms. By contrast, the expression *corpus mysticum* tends to express something more static, the body as formed by the flow of grace from the head to the members. "Les expressions," 663.

[35] Cf Serge-Thomas Bonino OP, "Le sacerdoce comme institution naturelle selon saint Thomas d'Aquin," *Revue Thomiste* 99.1 (1999): 56.

[36] ST III.22.1 cor. Bonino, "Le sacerdoce," 48-52; Jean-Pierre Torrell, "Le sacerdoce du Christ," 79-81.

[37] And yet it seems that Thomas finished III.1-25 in Paris and gave courses on Paul only in Naples. Torrell OP, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 1:250-257. If this chronology is right, then the question on the priesthood cannot be the result of his Hebrews commentary, but rather, the Hebrews commentary relies upon the theology found here, much in the same way as Charles Morard argues for the theology of priesthood at work in the commentary on the Psalms. "Sacerdoce du Christ et sacerdoce des chrétiens dans le *Commentaire des Psaumes* de saint Thomas d'Aquin," *Revue*

human, and thus that Christ was priest by virtue of his humanity.[38] The "downward" aspect of the priestly office, another innovation, comes from Mal 2:7.[39] The levitical priests referred to in this text could only hand on the Old Law, which failed to make people righteous, but Christ hands on the New Law, that is, the "great and precious promises" by which we are made "sharers of the divine nature."[40] O'Neill suggests that placing the "downward" aspect of the priesthood first serves to emphasize its truly mediatory quality compared to the merely figurative levitical priesthood.[41]

Thus mediatorship is essential to the notion of priesthood: focussing (as Thomas tends to) on the upward movement, all human beings are called to pray and offer sacrifice, but the priest does so on behalf of others.[42] Priesthood thus implies an inability in the others, which Thomas attributes to sin. Fundamental to priesthood for Thomas, therefore, is that it deals with sin.

6.2.2.2 Priesthood and praise

One might conclude, therefore, that once we are released from sin and have received the promised share in the divine nature which Christ as priest brought to us, Christ would cease to be our priest. However, like Melchizedek's, Christ's priesthood is eternal, for the sacrifice of Christ was not for the sake of mere passing goods, but for eternal ones (Heb 9:11), and thus the bestowal of glory is the consummation of that one expiatory sacrifice, and we need that this take place through Christ.[43] For

Thomiste 99.1 (1999): 141-142.

38 ST III.22.3 obj 1, 22.5 obj 3, III.50.4 obj 3.

39 Torrell, "Le sacerdoce," 80-81.

40 ST III.22.1 cor. For Christ as a teacher on the cross, see Charles Morard, "Sacerdoce du Christ et des chrétiens," 138-140.

41 O'Neill "Appendix 5: The Priesthood of Christ," 247-248.

42 For sacrifice, see ST II-II.85.4, especially obj 3 and ad 3. All are obliged to pray, even for others: ST II-II.83.2 and 5, and ST III.22.4 ad 1. Mediatorship is a larger category than priesthood. The *Summa* has a question on both, but oddly the more general one comes second. Cf Torrell, "Le sacerdoce du Christ," 97-100; Remy, "Sacerdoce et médiation," 103-104.

43 ST III.22.5

Thomas not only shows that Christ is both priest and victim, but also shows that he is the victim for all three stages through which one is taken by sacrifice: forgiveness of sin, preservation in grace, and union with God in glory.[44] In this way we can understand Thomas' claim that even the voluntary and votive offerings, as well as those for satisfaction, take place through the priest, for they are part of the consummation of the original expiatory sacrifice.[45] It is perhaps also in this sense that the sacrifice of praise, which Thomas finds Christ the priest offering in the psalms (where Christ is sometimes praying in the *persona* of the sinner or the pentitent), is and remains part of his priestly office.[46] In this vein, Matthew Levering has written extensively about how Thomas sees Christ as the fulfilment of the Jewish Temple.[47]

6.2.2.3 Christ not a priest for himself

In order to save the word "merit" as applied to Christ, Thomas had to show that Christ in some way merited for himself. But as mediatorship is essential to priesthood, Thomas shows that Christ is truly a priest because he in no way benefits from his priestly act considered as priestly, because he alone is without sin.[48] The priests of the Old Law offered sacrifices for sin for themselves, but they were merely figures of the true priest; the priests of the New Law do not act of themselves but *in persona Christi*. In response to the objection that Christ's priestly act also included prayer, Thomas rejects the line of argument claiming that, although priests should

[44] ST III.22.2 cor. In this context Thomas notes (citing Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* 10.6) that a visible sacrifice has what we have seen to be the nature of the gift, being the sacrament (sign) of the invisible sacrifice by which the human *spiritus* is lifted up to God.
[45] *Super Hebraeos* 5.1 (M244).
[46] Charles Morard, "Sacerdoce du Christ et des chrétiens," 132-135.
[47] Matthew Levering, *Christ's Fulfilment of Temple and Torah: Salvation according to Thomas Aquinas* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002), 108-125.
[48] ST III.22.4 cor, ad 1, ad 2.

pray, that it is not proper to their office, for Hebrews 5:6 contradicts this. Rather, he points out that the priestly prayer of Christ mentioned in this this verse is that he should be saved from death: as Christ is subject to death due to taking on the likeness of sin, this prayer is priestly, not absolutely, but *secundum quid*. Similarly, the sacrifice as sacrifice was offered for satisfaction, and thus had no effect on Christ; the love and devotion with which the sacrifice was made were what made it meritorious so that we can speak of Christ meriting through his passion. After all, Thomas insists that Christ's charity is the same in all his actions - indeed, any action of Christ was of sufficient merit to satisfy or us - but the passion did actually satisfy because Christ deputed it for that reason, as it was the most *conveniens* for that purpose, the act most apt for overcoming the obstacles.[49]

If we consider the three questions about Christ's stance towards the Father, therefore, we see that, in his human nature, Christ is subject to the Father, and honours him through acts of prayer (petition), sacrifice and praise. Yet precisely in these acts of religion, which are so constitutive of human subjectivity, Christ is not acting for himself, but for others, and indeed for sinful others, and the others are acting through him. Moreover, the action of these others is the praise of God, which will find its consummation in the "glory of divine fruition."[50] Thus through his priesthood Christ is the head of the *corpus mysticum* which is the Church (leaving aside the question of how the angels are included). How we actually participate in the priesthood of Christ shall be discussed later.

[49] 2.1.2
[50] ST III.8.4 cor.

6.2.3 The extensions of Christ's adorable humanity

Christ, taken as the subject of worship, extends beyond the human body and soul, and this is also the case, in a different way, for Christ as the object of worship. According to Thomas, there are three sorts of material objects which we can honour with *latria*: the sacred humanity of Christ (because its supposit is the divine Word); images of Christ (because homage paid to an image as image is homage paid to the one the image represents); and certain objects that have had physical contact with Christ.[51] The first case is a direct consequence of the incarnation; the second has been the object of fierce controversy and much study; the third has been neglected, but will prove useful for our research.

The adoration of things that have touched Christ (and we shall consider in particular his clothes) is a consequence of the adoration of the sacred humanity itself. Thomas notes that we can honour the humanity of Christ as the perfection of humanity with the adoration of *dulia*, but we can also honour it with the adoration of *latria* as the humanity of the divine Word whose humanity it is, just as to adore the robes of the king is nothing other than adoring the king robed.[52] Indeed, by using this argument Thomas is presuming the possibility of the adoration of Christ's clothes in order to argue for the adoration of his sacred humanity. The same comparison with the adoration of the king's robes is made when discussing the adoration of the cross of Christ, which can be adored with *latria* as an image of Christ, or because of its contact with this body, and for this second reason, citing John Damascene, even the "nails, clothes, lance and his sacred tabernacle" can be adored with *latria*.[53] For

[51] ST III.25.2-4.

[52] ST III.25.2 cor. "Adoration" means honouring with bodily gestures; the adoration of a king is *dulia*, not *latria*.

[53] ST III.25.4 cor and ad 3. People associated with Christ should be honoured with *dulia* (or, in the case of his blessed Mother, *hyperdulia*), but not *latria*, to avoid confusion about the reason for the honour (III.25.5); relics of saints, either their bodies or their clothes, etc., can also be honoured, but

Thomas the natural body of Christ is a well-defined entity;[54] however, he has no name for this extension of its adorability: we could call it the extension of the subject to be worshipped, but given its very corporeal and inanimate nature, I would prefer to call it an extension of the visible mission. And what is visible is also, as we shall see, more easily giveable.

6.2.4 Our identity in Christ

Of the remaining questions in this tract, those on adoption and predestination still tease out the grammar of the hypostatic union, but, as far as they concern us, they are less about extensions of Christ's subjectivity or objectivity, and more about our finding subjectivity or identity through Christ. Christ himself is not adopted, but through his natural sonship we come to adoptive sonship.[55] God's individual, unchangeable and entirely unmerited choice of each of the elect involves their coming to glory through Christ[56]. The image of the Book of Life that Thomas discusses with predestination in *Prima Pars* opens a number of possibilities: Christ's story and our story being intertwined, or God's writing us in the Book of Life justifying the spiritual readings whereby we find ourselves in the Scriptures, but there is no indication that these images operated that way for Thomas.[57]

When it comes to mediation, it is worth bearing in mind the observation of Emmanuel Perrier that, for Thomas, there is no "concept médiateur" through which we understand our relation with God, "for Christ alone is the mediator in his own person."[58] Mediation has been left to last to include all that went before, with

Thomas does not clearly state at what level.

54 ST III.50.2 cor and ad 2.

55 ST III.23.3-4.

56 ST III.24.3-4.

57 ST I.24.

58 Emmanuel Perrier OP, "L'enjeu christologique de la satisfaction (II)," *Revue Thomiste* 103:2

priesthood treated separately so as to form a short section on religion.[59] Thus we are reminded that in Christ alone we find our way to God, and in him alone we find our true identity, for the first in any genus is the cause of all the others in that genus.

This tract establishes the possibility of benefiting from Christ's merit and his priestly sacrifice by being part of his mystical body, but as for its construction or how we become members, there is but one brief reference to baptism, for that will be treated at its proper place. But before we go to the sacraments and the passion from which they gain their efficacy, Thomas takes us through the mysteries of Christ. Now, Thomas' favourite proof text for our incorporation into Christ through baptism is Galatians 3:27, which uses the image of clothing.[60] We have already seen clothing as an extension of the visible mission; I shall now trace some of the meanings it acquires during the life of Christ so that we can finally see what he does on the Cross that enables us to "put on Christ" through baptism.

6.3 Being clothed in Christ

Thomas reads the gospel texts which mentions Christ's clothes both literally, showing that healing power comes through the clothes themselves, and mystically, as representing other extensions of the visible mission through which healing power can

(April-June 2003): 214.

[59] Given the overall framing of the question in terms of Christ's relation to the Father, the Father's relation to Christ, and Christ's relation to us, this means that the priesthood concentrates on the "upward" aspect (not, for instance, on teaching), and mediation on the way Christ brings God to us (and not, for instance, his intercession). Lafont, *Structures*, 392.

[60] ST III.19.4 ad 3 (which we saw when discussing merit), III.62.1 cor, 68.1 cor, 68.4 cor, 69.9 obj 1, *Quodlibet* 6.3.1 cor., *Super I Corinthios*, 12.3 (M734), *Super II Corinthios* 12.1 (M445), *Super Romanos* 8.1 (M596). He has other proof texts: Augustine *Ad Bonifacium* (*Scriptum* 4.4.2.2.5 sed contra 1); Romans 6: 3 or 6:8, when he wants to emphasize sharing in the passion and death of Christ (ST III.68.5 cor, III.69.2 cor); and Augustine *De Baptismo Parvulorum*, "ad hoc Baptismus valet, ut baptizati Christo incorporentur ut membra eius," (ST III.68.5 ad 1, 68.8 obj 3, 69.4 cor, 69.5 sed contra): this text seems to be used where Thomas wants an explicit mention of incorporation. He uses Ephesians 3:17 as a proof text for incorporation, but as it takes place through faith, not through baptism (ST 68.1 ad 1, 68.8 obj 3, 69.5 obj 1). He does not seem to use 1 Cor 12:13 ("we were all baptized into one body").

flow when Christ's natural body is not present. In fact, such a mystical reading is an integral part of Christ's preparation of the disciples for his passion.

Thomas sometimes mystically interprets Christ's clothes as his *corpus mysticum*, for instance, the seamless robe represents the Church spread throughout the world but still united.[61] The story of the woman who touched the hem of Christ's garment, however, is worthy of close attention, because we get both a literal and a mystical reading.

6.3.1 The hem of Christ's robe

In his comments on the Matthaean version of the woman who is healed by touching the hem of Christ's robe, Thomas cites Hilary, "Great is the power (*virtus*) of Christ, because it is not only in the soul, but redounds from the soul into the body and from the body into the clothes," and then concludes that we should honour anything that has touched the body of Christ.[62] This redounding is not an automatic process, for remarks in the *Catena* indicate that Jesus allowed power to flow out of him.[63] But Thomas is not content with the literal sense of the text. He also reads the text spiritually, taking the woman to represent the Gentiles who come to Christ in faith after his death (which of course has a literal scriptural base, Romans 9-11). And so he can give a mystical interpretation of the details: she approaches in faith, but from behind, because the Gentiles do not come to Christ while he is alive. "She touched the clothing, that is, the humanity, and only the fringe, because through the

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61 *Super Ioannem* 19.4 (M2429).

62 *Super Matthaeum* cap. 9, lect. 4. (M783) In other places Thomas accounts for healing through touch by saying that the humanity is an instrument organ of the divinity; as he also makes use of the distinction between a conjoint instrument or organ (the hand) and a separate instrument (a stick held in the hand), Christ's robe here obviously falls into the category of the separate instrument.

63 *Catena in Marcum*, 5.2 (citing Chrysostom).

apostles only."[64] He provides a very similar explanation of the woman's remark that she need only touch the fringe to be saved, relying on an allegorical explanation of Psalm 132, about the ointment on Aaron's head, beard and robes, which would seem to give scriptural support to this argument, but is immediately interpreted allegorically: the descent into the beard is the descent of the divinity into the flesh; into the edge of the robe is into the apostles.[65] Thomas sees in the clothes of Christ the type of a tangible presence of Christ that continues after his ascension, thus making Christ's bodily presence available to the whole world. Of course, that presence avails only to those who have faith, the woman's faith being a constant theme of Thomas' comments on that passage, even if he does not pick up the distinction made by various fathers cited in the *Catena* between the crowds that press on Jesus (*comprimere*) and the woman who touches (*tangit*) in faith.[66]

6.3.2 The transfiguration

The event where the clothes have the most important role is the transfiguration. Thomas holds that Christ was transfigured so that the disciples, seeing the glory that he would reach through his passion, would themselves be better prepared to follow him in his passion.[67] This means that the transfiguration, or at least one part of it, must be interpreted anagogically. That part of the event is the shining of his clothes. Thomas first of all considers it literally, noting that it is

[64] *Super Matthaeum* 9.4 (M782)

[65] We also get the literal sense of this text at ST I-II.102.5 ad 8 and 9 (explaining the anointing of a high priest), an anagogical explanation at *Super Psalmos* 26.1 (our sharing in Christ's priesthood is a figure of our sharing in the kingdom to come), and a tropological explanation at *Super Ioannem* 17.4 (M2231), where it is used to explain "consecrate them in the truth" as a deputation to worship.

[66] *Catena in Lucam* 8, citing the *Moralia* of Gregory, Bede, and Ambrose.

[67] ST III.45 cor. As Torrell comments, modern exegetes tend to agree with this. *Le Christ en ses mystères*, 1:258.

strange, because, whereas the glorified body naturally receives the glory that redounds from the soul, clothes are not part of the body, they do not have a connection with the soul, and should not naturally share its glory. Thus the manifestation of glory in the transfiguration, while truly showing the glory that Christ will have, happens miraculously.[68] Not surprisingly, the shining of the clothes becomes a focus for interpretations, and Thomas gives us two: the clothes can represent the saints by whom Christ in glory will be surrounded, or the letter of sacred scripture.[69]

This second interpretation is found in both Origen and Ambrose, and Thomas gives their explanations at greater length in the *Catena*. In effect, Origen compares the transfiguration, which is a special manifestation of glory to the disciples (and not to everybody) with the spiritual reading, by which those who have the capacity move from knowing Christ according to the flesh to knowing him as God the Word. Such knowledge is only possible for those who climb the mountain and leave worldly ways behind. The clothes, as mentioned, represent the "words and letters of the Gospels, with which Jesus is clothed, according to those things which are said about him by the apostles."[70] A similar interpretation from Ambrose is given in the *Catena in Lucam*.[71]

Given the purpose Thomas attributes to the transfiguration, it is natural that the first interpretation has priority, particularly when Thomas is trying to place it in

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[68] Despite this, Cajetan simply says that the glory of Christ was so great as to cause (*efficiat*) the clothes to shine and the cloud to glow "through the emission of its rays" - in other words, it is not an independent miracle, and there is no sense of Christ *choosing* to share his glory with his disciples. *Commentaria,* ad locum. The basics of Cajetan's interpretation are not disputed either by P Synave, "Notes explicatives" Appendix I in Thomas Aquinas*, La somme théologique : Vie de Jésus* ed. P Synave OP, Tome Deuxième *3ª, Questions 35-45*, (2nd edition) (Paris: Desclée, 1947), 392 or by Torrell, *Le Christ en ses mystères*, 1:289.

[69] *Super Matthaeum* 17.1 (M1427); cf. ST III.45.2 ad 3.

[70] *Catena in Matthaeum*, 17.1.

[71] *Catena in Lucam*, 9.6.

the life of Christ.[72] But the second interpretation supports the first. Precisely because the transfiguration is a miracle, not a natural redounding, it is willed by Christ and thus a gift/sign to the chosen disciples (as Origen says) requiring interpretation.

6.3.3 Putting on Christ

In these examples, the clothes become a symbol for various ways in which the visible mission is extended. Thus the extension of the visible mission into the apostles and their successors is but one extension among several. Indeed, it is almost an expected result of a presence of God in the world, for something in act acts outside itself.[73] But the clothes also become a symbol for the very manifestation of the Word, both in the scriptural text and in the humanity of Christ. Thus, despite his very strong reservations about a possible super-Nestorianism that says that the Word puts on humanity as a human being puts on clothes (for clothes are only accidentally united to a human being, and do not form one person with him), Thomas realises that the image is helpful, because the Word is seen through the human nature, as people are through their clothes; moreover, when one puts on clothes, they adopt the shape (*figura*) of the one wearing them.[74]

There is one place, however, where Thomas embraces this ambiguity, and if we consider what is happening there, this sheds a light on a very different use of the clothing metaphor to explain baptism.

Commenting on "Wash me, I shall be whiter than snow" in Psalm 50, Thomas picks up the image of the clothes of Christ becoming whiter than snow at the

[72] It is the only explanation found in the *Summa*.
[73] Cf the remarks of Chrysostom referred to above in the *Catena in Marcum*, 5.2.
[74] ST III.2.6 cor and ad 1.

transfiguration, drawing upon the familiar interpretation of the clothes as the souls of the just, quoting Isaiah, "with all these you shall be clothed as with a garment."[75] He then links this with the baptismal washing by citing Galatians 3:27, "All you who have been baptized have put on Christ." He has suddenly switched from Christ putting on us to us putting on Christ. If we look at some of the other usages he has made of the metaphor of clothing ourselves with Christ, we can make some sense of this paradox.

When Christ puts on humanity, he changes it for the better, as we have seen. When we put on Christ, we put on the "new humanity" (*novum hominem*) as reformed by Christ. This above all means putting on his virtues (which belong to him in his humanity), which are not simply good habits, but sources of power, and Thomas uses the image of wood "putting on" fire and participating in the power of the fire.[76] But also putting on clothes involves protection, covering, and the way we look (our "colour"). In the one who has put on Christ, nothing appears accept what is of Christ.[77] All this will be important later when we talk about sacraments configuring us to Christ (the clothes adopt the "figure" of the one wears them), particularly being configured to his sufferings in preparation for configuration to his glory. But at this point what matters is the flexibility of the metaphor of clothing, which Christ can put on, change ("reconfigure"?) and then hand on to us for us to wear and be reconfigured thereby. Thomas sees the baptismal water as working this way: Christ having put on the "likeness of the flesh of sin," enters the baptismal water, not to be cleansed by it but to cleanse it through his sinless flesh, and then

[75] *Super Psalmos* 50.4.
[76] *Super Galatos* 3.9.
[77] There is no trace here of the argument that we remain sinners, but God looks at us and sees only Christ and so does not punish. For Thomas, outward signs are not for God, who seeks only charity, but for humans, who, having put on Christ, learn to interpret their lives according to the life of Christ, as we shall see in greater detail in chapter seven.

leaves the water, allowing us in our carnal nature to enter the water and be sanctified by it.[78]

6.3.4 Configuration and conformity

We should note that for Thomas to be configured is quite different from being conformed. *Figura* denotes something merely external, such as the shape, and *forma* denotes a foundational inner principle.[79] Thus he says that in baptism "all clothe themselves in Christ through the configuration of character, but not through the conformity of grace."[80] Configuration should lead to conformity, and without conformity configuration is of no avail.[81] But also, *figura* is that which enables an allegorical reading. To say that we are configured to the death of Christ in baptism, and that the sufferings we endure after baptism are configured to his sufferings, is to say that, through the action of Christ we can read our story as his story: through the exchange of *figura* in baptism, we have somehow become sharers in Christ's

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[78] ST III.29.1 cor. Thomas is careful to argue that the power that flows from Christ into the water is based "not on being connected in space, but on the likeness of appearance (*non propter continuitatem loci, sed propter similitudinem speciei*)." ST III.66.3 ad 4. He also notes that the Jordan symbolized entry into the Promised Land, whereas the Red Sea symbolized merely release from sin. ST III.29.4 cor, ad 1.

[79] Cf the way Thomas connects the meaning of *transfigurare* with *figura*. ST III.45.1. (Jerome, cited in ad 1, is not so technical in his use of *forma*.)

As a result of this basic meaning of *figura*, the word can sometimes mean "any sign, which is set up to signify something, by means of assimilation to another thing." *Scriptum* 3.16.2.1 ad 1. The two cases in the authentic works of Thomas that talks of a of "configuration" with respect to grace (*Scriptum* 4.4.1.2.2 obj 3, ST III.63.3 ad 1) fall into this category. Thomas does talk of being configured in glory, (e.g. ST III.25.6 cor, III.45.1 ad 1) but in those cases he is talking of the glory that redounds to the body, and is influenced by Philippians 3:21 "configuratum corpori claritatis suae."

Thus I disagree with Bernhard Blankenhorn's claim that "the two terms seem to be synonymous for Thomas." "The Place of Romans 6 in Aquinas's Doctrine of Sacramental Causality: A Balance of History and Metaphysics," in *Ressourcement Thomism: Sacred Doctrine,the Sacraments, and the Moral Life: Essays in Honor of Romanus Cessario O.P.*, ed. Reinhard Hütter and Matthew Levering, (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2010), 143.

[80] ST III.69.9 ad 1.

[81] ST III.70.4 ad 1. Hence, commenting on the parable of the wedding feast, Thomas shows that it is not sufficient merely to have put on Christ "through the sacrament" without putting him on through charity, the remembrance of his death, and "conformity of works." *Super Matthaeum* 22.1 (M1770).

narrative subjectivity, and particulary in the narrative of his priestly action.[82] We can recall Mailhiot's claim that the spiritual readings are based on our incorporation into Christ.[83]

6.4 The passion as the moment of giving

The argument so far has been based on the mysteries of Christ's life (baptism, miracles, transfiguration) which are preparatory to his passion.[84] The passion, as well as being Christ's great priestly act, is also the act by which he enables us to "passively share" in his priesthood by receiving its benefits, because priestly sacrifice is by definition sacrifice for others.[85]

The passive power to receive the fruits of Christ's priesthood cannot be given to us without a visible and voluntary act of giving. Thomas sees this taking place through the symbolic gift to us of the water and blood that flows from Christ side, the only aspect of the passion according to John that he calls the "cause of salvation."[86]

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82 ST III.45.1 cor, 49.3 ad 2, ad 3; III.63.3 cor, ad 2; III.66.2 cor, III.69.3 cor.

83 Mailhiot OP, "La pensée," 615n 2, 640-641.

84 This provides a way of talking about the presence of the mysteries of Christ in the sacraments, which theologians have been seeking ever since the provocative but unrealistic theory of *Mysteriengegenwart*. Odo Casel, "The Mystery of Christian Worship" in *The Mystery of Christian Worship and Other Writings*, (London: Darton, Longmans and Todd, 1962), 27-38 See, for instance, Leeming *Sacramental Theology*, 288, 305-313; O'Neill, *Sacramental Realism*, 121. Schillebeeckx suggests that the historic mysteries are present in the sacraments through the "salvific sacrificial will" "interior to the salvific human act itself" because the beatific vision gives all Christ's acts a "weight of eternity." *L'économie*, 135-147 (Casel referred to 140, 144; quotes from 146). However, this cannot even begin to say how the effect of, say, the baptism present in the sacrament is different from the effect of the transfiguration, for, as we have seen, Thomas regards the charity interior to these acts as being exactly the same. We shall deal with the working of memory in the sacraments in chapter seven.

85 ST III.63.2 cor. Cf Colman O'Neill "Appendix 5: The Priesthood of Christ: 3a. 22," in Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, vol. 50 *The One Mediator 3a. 16-26* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1965), 248.

86 *Super Ioannem* 19.5 (M2458)

6.4.1 The flow of blood and water

The voluntary nature of this event is a part of the voluntary nature of Christ's sacrificial death: “none of us has the power to sleep when he would like to as Christ had to die when he wanted to.”[87] Even though the flow of blood and water happens when Christ is already dead, Thomas sees it as intended by Christ (presumably as an integral part of his dying), and with a literal meaning: “so that Christ might show what he was, namely truly human.” Nor is it an accident that there is uncongealed blood and the purest of water flowing from a dead body: like the shining of the clothes at the transfiguration, it is a miracle.[88] Beyond the literal meaning it has mystical meanings. It is a fulfilment of figures (the opening in the side of the ark, Eve coming forth from the side of Adam); it shows that we are washed from sins and stains of sin through the passion; and it points to the sacraments of baptism and Eucharist, or perhaps the Eucharist alone.

6.4.2 Reception in faith

It is by receiving these sacraments that the effect of Christ's sacrifice is mediated to us, and so his sacrifice is truly priestly. As Thomas says repeatedly, the sacrifice of the cross is applied to us through faith and the sacraments of the faith.[89] The first virtue that a law teaches is that of obedience to the law.[90] Similarly, to accept a sacrament is an act of worship honouring the giver of the sacrament, and, as such, is a protestation of faith in the power of that sacrament.[91] Thus it is through

87 *Super Ioannem* 19.5 (M2432), citing Augustine. Cf ST III.22.2 ad 1.
88 It is “valde miraculosum.” *Super Ioannem* 19.5 (M2458)
89 ST III.48.6 ad 2, III.49.3 ad 1, III.49.5 cor. Häring comments on the close links between these two in *Sacraments*, 128.
90 ST I-II.92.1 cor, ad 4.
91 ST II-II.89 prologus, ST III.61.4 cor. Cf Chauvet, “The 'first efficacy of rite' is to '*cause people to believe* in the rite itself '.” 347-348, citing F.A. Isambert, 'Réforme liturgique et analyses sociologiques,' *Le Maison Dieu* 128 (1976), 84. One could view this in the light of Mauss' remark,

faith in Christ the priest that we become part of the worshipping human subject of Christ, members of his mystical body, the Church, and equally that faith is the gift of God, in a certain sense given through the sacrament. But faith is merely a gift (object), not the spirit of the gift. Someone who has faith and not love is receiving "a grace" from Christ, who is the source of all "graces," and is thus connected to the head and part of the body. But because they are not receiving from Christ the head grace in its fullest sense, *gratia gratum faciens*, they are part of the body *secundum quid*, like a paralyzed limb that the body drags around with it.[92]

6.4.3 The relation between baptism and Eucharist

We should make a distinction here between the two sacraments. The blood that flows from Christ's side is the same blood that is given to us in the Eucharist; the water with which we are washed in baptism is merely the same element as that which flowed from Christ's side or in which he was baptized by John - the connection between them is through likeness or symbolism.[93] Thomas holds that efficient causality between corporeal things can only take place through physical contact: the passion of Christ is corporeal, as are our own bodies, that are the means through which God touches our souls, taking into account our fallen state.[94] Thus it is the Eucharist which is the chief of the sacraments, the one through which the other sacraments have their effect. Thomas quite explicitly says that baptism only works through an (at least implicit) desire for the Eucharist. To use Maussian terms,

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quoted earlier, that " the illusion of the real . . . is already of the real." See 4.3.2.
This does not apply if one approaches in a spirit of superstition or some other sort of fiction. This will be discussed in chapter nine.

92 ST III.8.3 cor, ad 2. The situation where at least one of the trio sacrament, faith and love is not present will be examined in more detail in chapter nine.

93 ST III.66.3 ad 4.

94 Cf ST III.62.6 cor.

baptism involves the giving of a *don d'institution*; the Eucharist, on the other hand, is the gift given within the existing relationship, but insofar as the Maussian gift is the gift of oneself, this is supremely realised in the Eucharist. The gift given and received puts the recipient in the power of the giver, for the recipient is in debt to the giver, and thus in the Eucharist (and through the Eucharist in baptism) the recipient is bound to the giver.[95]

As a *don d'institution*, baptism enables the gracious and meritorious exchange that is symbolized in the Eucharist. This does not mean that there was no prior exchange between God and humans, merely that the prior exchange was not gracious or meritorious: our reflections on Mauss have shown that enemies keep up a very lively (and deadly) exchange, but the exchange between enemies, even when it consists of "gifts," is motivated by fear and self-interest. We are enemies with God, not because God hates us, but because we are incapable of gracious exchange:[96] As we have seen, Thomas holds that we need a priest because sin prevents us from offering sacrifice to God.[97] The need for the incarnation and the sacraments is predicated upon our sinfulness and turning towards temporal goods;[98] and if we reckon things according to temporal goods, then we must look upon God as the provider of material rewards and punishments, climaxing in the punishment of death. A gracious exchange is only possible through learning to view death (and all the other *poenalitates* of sin) in a different light, and we have seen that baptism does this by configuring us to Christ by imitating his death and resurrection. Hence Thomas insists that the sacraments have their power through the passion of Christ.[99] Hence

[95] Mauss, *The Gift*, 51, 61.
[96] Cf ST III.49.4. Thomas still talks of God's hate for us (in that he wants to punish our sins), but he has already told us how to interpret such an expression (ST I.19.11 cor, I.20.2 ad 4).
[97] 6.2.2.
[98] ST III.1.3 cor, ad 1; III.61.1-2.
[99] ST III.62.5. For the relation between passion and resurrection in our justification and in the

also the role Thomas ascribes to faith, the faith implicit in receiving the sacrament. Moreover, the character given in baptism works by being a sign, and yet it is only a sign in relation to the outward ritual.[100] We do not enter into this gracious exchange except through a ritual that symbolizes the washing away of the stain of sin and the coolness that is the quenching of the fires of punishment.[101] Indeed, we can corroborate all that we have said about baptism by considering Thomas' theology of baptismal character, and character in general.

6.5 Baptismal character as a sharing in Christ's priesthood

The enrolment of a soldier is marked in two ways, and Thomas uses both of them to illustrate our following of Christ. Predestination is likened to writing the enlisted in a book,[102] and Thomas, innovating in the *Summa*, goes back to the primary meaning of "character" as a mark or brand on a soldier's body in order to understand the Christian reality that bears the same name.[103] Character is first and foremost some sort of sign. The definition of sign by Augustine universally accepted by the scholastics held that it was something detected by the senses;[104] Thomas admits that character is a sign in a derivative way, as being caused by an outward rite that is a sign. As a sign, it distinguishes those who bear it from those who do not.[105]

sacraments, see III.62.5 ad 3.

100 ST III.63.1 ad 2.

101 ST III.69.2 ad 2.

102 ST I.24.1 cor.

103 Schillebeeckx, *L'économie*, 409-410, comparing ST III.64.1 with *Scriptum* 4.4.1.1 cor.

104 *De Doctrina Christiana* 2.1, cited at ST III.63.1 ad 2. For its universal acceptance by the scholastics, see Irène Rosier Cattach, *La Parole efficace: signe, rituel, sacré* (Paris: Seuil, 2004), 481-482.

105 ST III.63.1 ad 2.

6.5.1 *Potestas* or *potentia*?

Thomas also argues that character is a spiritual power (*potestas*) and a participation in Christ's priesthood.[106] *Potestas* often denotes authority, for instance, marriage gives each spouse a *potestas* over the body of the other spouse, but this is not a new ability, but rather a consequence of their belonging to each other, to the intertwining of their subjectivities.[107] Similarly, Thomas refutes the idea that character is a radically new ability, a new *potentia* of the soul, for if it were, it would be located in the essence of the soul.[108] If Thomas does refer to character as a *potentia*, this is picking up the terminology of Aristotle who holds that only three sorts of things can exist in the soul, *potentia*, *habitus* or *passio*, or that *potentia* is the second species of quality.[109] But by making character reside in one of the existing powers (*potentiae*), Thomas is ensuring that it is a *potentia* only as a modification or perfection of a *potentia* that already exists. Indeed, the intellectual power already can perform those protestations of faith that are acts of worship, what is added to them by character is that Christ uses them as part of his worship.[110] Those who take

[106] ST III.63.2, 63.3 cor. Thomas' contemporaries had linked only the character of ordination to Christ's priesthood; Thomas saw the character of baptism (and confirmation) as linked to Christ's priesthood as well. B. Fraigneau-Julien, *L'Église et le caractère sacramental selon M.-J. Scheeben* (Paris (?): Desclée de Brouwer, 1958), 226,

[107] *Super I Corinthios* 7.1 (M314-325). It would be an interesting digression to explore the parallel between the formation of the mystical body through the Eucharist and Thomas' teaching about the formation of one body in marriage through the creation of a mutual debt which is paid through the gift of one's body. (See also *Scriptum* 4.27.1.3; 4.32.) But I shall not do so because, although Thomas often states that marriage is an image of the union between Christ and the Church, I can find no evidence of any influence in this regard in either direction. Thomas does sometimes make use of the parallel, for instance, arguing that sacramental marriage is indissoluble because it is an image of the bond between Christ and the Church (*Summa Contra Gentiles* 4.78.4-5), but not at the level of how the bond is constructed or maintained.

[108] ST III.63.4 ad 2. Admittedly the distinction between *potentia* and *potestas* is by no means absolute, but *potentia* is very definitely a principle of operation that enables one to act on an other object (ST I.8.3 ad 3, I.25.1 obj 3, I.41.4 cor), and it would not be used for an authority to act in the way that *potestas* is used. As an indication, the *Index Thomisticus* gives 19 places in Thomas' works where *potestas* is used with *Papa*, but none for *potentia*.

[109] ST III.63.2 sed contra, cor. Similarly, discussing the character of confirmation, Thomas uses *potentia* when making an Aristotelian distinction, but then *potestas* when showing how this "power" is used. ST III.72.5 obj 2, ad 2.

[110] ST III.63.4 ad 3.

part in Christian worship are ministers of Christ, and thus instrumental causes.[111] As part of Christ's worship, the acts of the Christian give glory to God in a way they could not otherwise achieve. They do not thereby merit anything more for the worshipper, because merit comes from charity which comes from grace, and character and grace, even if related, are clearly distinct; indeed, character is directed primarily towards worship and only secondarily towards grace.[112] Christ's worship is priestly, that is, it offers something to God on behalf of others, and therefore requires for its completion others who receive its effects. Baptism designates some people as chosen by Christ to receive the effects of his priestly act, for Thomas insists both that receiving a sacraments is an act of worship, and that baptism only has its effects because it is ordered towards the Eucharist.[113]

Against this seemingly reductionist reading one could cite those passages where Thomas refers to character as a "spiritual sign" and a "spiritual power."[114] It is important here to see the primary referent of "spiritual." It is the cult that involves the sacraments of the New Law which is spiritual, because it has a spiritual effect: these sacraments contain and cause grace in a way that those of the Old Law do not.[115] Whatever change circumcision makes on a person's subjectivity, it does not connect it with the subjectivity of Christ or make it part of any narrative involving spiritual rewards. There is no need for a spiritual sign, so a purely corporeal sign suffices.

This position is worth comparing with that of Schillebeeckx, who claims that such deputation to worship is is purely juridical - even among the Jews - but

[111] ST III.63.2 cor, 63.5 ad 1.
[112] O'Neill, *Meeting Christ,* 93, with reference to ST III.63.4 ad 1.
[113] ST II-II.89 prologus, ST III.73.3 cor.
[114] ST III.63.1 cor, ad 3; III.63.2. III.63.5 cor, III.72.5 cor, ad2.
[115] ST III.63.1 ad 3.

in the Church it is a "potentia physica."[116] The very fact that he needs to introduce a term foreign to Thomas points to a misreading; if it were a new *potentia physica*, then it would reside in the essence of the soul. Not that we could call character "juridical" - it is about subjectivity, identity, and what in some cultures is called "face." It is very much a "personalist" term.

The second difference is the emphasis on the community. For Thomas, it is not so much initiation into the Church that brings about this spiritual power, but belonging to Christ. Baptism first of all links a person to Christ, makes them a member of Christ, and because there are many members organized towards perfecting each other in worship, this multitude is a body with Christ as head. There is a tendency in some recent theologies to start at the anthropological level and hold that the Church, as a community, can initiate members into itself, and then to argue up from that to the ability to take part in the priestly act of Christ.[117] For Thomas the sacrament always has Christ as its principal agent, and the minister is at the level of an instrumental cause. Character is the character of Christ that distinguishes members of the Church, and not the character of the Church.[118] It is Christ who acts to authorise a person to share his subjectivity. Authorisation, of its nature, comes as a gift; it cannot be presumed, and so its bestowal must be displayed in signs.

6.5.2 From character to grace

Thus far I have been speaking of baptismal character, the gift object, rather

[116] Schillebeeckx, *L'économie*, 416.

[117] For example, see the critique by Michael Dauphinais of the approach of Joseph Martos, "Christ and the Metaphysics of Baptism in the *Summa Theologiae* and the *Commentary on John*," in *Rediscovering Aquinas and the Sacraments: Studies in Sacramental Theology* , ed. Matthew Levering and Michael Dauphinais (Chicago: Hillenbrand Books, 2009), 15-16, with reference to Joseph Martos, *Doors to the Sacred: A Historical Introduction to Sacraments in the Catholic Church* (Chicago: Triumph Books, 1991), 164-165, 176.

[118] ST III.63.3.

than the grace of the Holy Spirit, the spirit of the gift. But Thomas follows Augustine in holding that "each human being becomes a Christian from the beginning of her own faith by the same grace as that human being from the beginning became Christ."[119] Accordingly, not when discussing the grace of Christ, but when considering the mysteries of his life, Thomas talks of the work of the Holy Spirit in the conception of Christ, showing how it parallels the Spirit's work in our becoming adoptive sons.[120]

The Spirit was operative in Christ first of all because God's plan for the incarnation was conceived out of love. Thomas here does not argue, as he could, that Christ's predestination to glory was the model and cause of ours, because in one single act God intended that our glory should come through the glory of Christ, and therefore our predestination is equally the work of the Holy Spirit.[121] Rather, he reminds us that it was love of us sinners that prompted the love of that human nature: "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son."

Secondly, Christ's birth from (*de*) the Holy Spirit (presumably meaning the miraculous formation of his human nature in the Virgin's womb) was indicative of the fact that the assumption of a human nature into the unity of the person of the Son was without preceding merits (as, we have argued, is the assumption of our human nature into the *persona mystica* formed from the "subjectivity" of the Son).

Thirdly, the purpose of the union is that a human being should be the natural Son of God - and this is the Holy Spirit's work, just as it is the Holy Spirit who makes us adoptive sons, crying "Abba, Father!" (and thus acknowledging the source)

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[119] ST III.2.10 sed contra, III.7.13 obj 1, III.23.4 obj 2, citing Augustine, *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum* 10.
[120] Cf ST III.32.1 cor, which is the source of the next three paragraphs.
[121] Cf ST III.24.3 cor, 4 cor, ad 3.

- and holy, for the Spirit is also the Spirit of sanctification.[122]

Christ is the first in the genus of graced people, and so is the source and model of all those who have grace. This grace is given to us through baptism. At the level of the *sacramentum tantum*, it is an extension of the visible mission of the Son; at the level of the *res et sacramentum*, a share in Christ's "subjectivity" (e.g. his priesthood), one gift object of the many which he has in all their fulness.[123] And through these visible means we receive the gift objects, given gratuitously, and so we are graced with the overflow of Christ's grace.

But the efficacy of baptism depends upon a desire for the Eucharist, an examination of which in chapter seven will explain more fully many of the points made here, particularly the saving significance of the passion.

[122] This sheds further light on how baptismal character, unlike the deputation to worship through circumcision under the Old Law, is a "spiritual character" (ST III.63.1 ad 3) and the work of the Holy Spirit, without denying that it is *potestas* rather than *potentia*.

[123] Cf the description of the capital grace of Christ at ST III.8.1 cor.

CHAPTER SEVEN

EUCHARIST AS "GOOD *GRATIA*"

7 The Eucharist as gracious gift object

Of all the sacraments, the Eucharist can most easily be considered as an extension of the visible mission of the Word, for here we have the body and blood of Christ available to our senses. In order for this "visible mission" to become an invisible mission (and thus be accompanied by an invisible mission of the Holy Spirit, that is, grace), it needs to reach through to our intellect, in other words, it must be read, or considered as a sign, and not only as a sign of the body of Christ (the literal sense of the sign), but a sign of the body as graciously given so as to excite gratitude, and, more specifically, as sufficiently precious - either in itself or in what it means for us - so that the gratitude is grace, the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Thomas succinctly describes the Eucharist as such a gift object in his Magnificat antiphon for the Office of Corpus Christi.

O sacrum convivium, in quo Christus sumitur,	O sacred banquet in which Christ is received,
recolitur memoria passionis eius,	the memory of his passion is renewed,
mens impletur gratia	the mind is filled with grace
et futurae gloriae nobis pignus datur.	and a pledge of future glory is given to us.

The structure of the antiphon reflects the structure of the sacrament as examined in chapter two. There is the *sacramentum tantum*, the *convivium* (shared meal) which signifies and makes really present the *res et sacramentum*, the body of Christ. The body (and blood) of Christ as signified in turn indicate the *res sacramenti* through a threefold sign: rememorative of the passion, the efficient cause of our sanctification; demonstrative of the formal cause of our sanctification, grace;

and foretelling the final cause of our sanctification, future glory.[1]

But there is another approach to the causality of the sacrament, for our sanctification is equivalent to the presence of the Holy Spirit by which charity is poured into our hearts. The Holy Spirit, of course, is uncaused, but love has causes - goodness, knowledge and likeness - and charity is love whose object is *magni pretii*. If the Holy Spirit is present in our hearts through love, then these three causes must be operating. The threefold nature of this cause does not reflect an Aristotelian division: they describe not only the efficient cause, but (at least) also the final cause, for the lover seeks the good of the beloved, wants to know the beloved and be united to the beloved. But this threefold division does in some way correspond to faith, hope and love. Faith lets us know that beyond this bodily world there exists a spiritual world of great value, which God wants to share with us; this then gives us a potential likeness, a likeness in hope; and the gratuity with which this hope is offered makes us respond in love.

There is an intricate network of causality here that defies being reduced to a single logical thread. The presentation of the Eucharist in the *Summa* has quite a different logic to that used in the commentary on John 6, and neither of them really follows the plan proposed to us by the Magnificat antiphon. What I want to do is as follows.

First, I shall consider Thomas' commentary on John 6. Being based upon a narrative, it is more concerned with development and transition than are Thomas' other accounts of the Eucharist. In particular I want to consider it as the move from a carnal economy to a spiritual one that comes about through faith.

Going from faith to hope, I shall then consider what Thomas says about

[1] ST 60.3 cor.

covenant and pledge, which are the basis of our hope. Starting from his comments on the words over the chalice, I shall consider how God uses material things to give hope to people *collapsi ad corpora*, and therefore how our potential spiritual likeness must somehow be based upon a bodily likeness. The bodily likeness is, of course, the first gift object which enables a second one, the spiritual gift. But we shall also need to consider how our hope is not only for union with God but also for union with the Church.

When faith discloses to us the object of our hope, we also can realise that something of great price has been freely and graciously given to us, and thus respond in love. This will entail a reading of the passion as an act of love, great in itself and even greater when considered as made in the face of suffering and sin. The way that this promotes love in us will then help to explain why Christ's death (represented in the Eucharist) can be considered as satisfying for us, and the role of the explanation that he can satisfy for us because we are one body with him.

And after that, there will still be facets of Thomas' presentation of the Eucharist in the *Summa* that offer further insights or which need to be reconciled with this overall picture.

7.1 The Eucharist and faith

7.1.1 Thomas on John's Gospel as a whole

Ceslaus Spicq notes that early scholastic commentators used to give the *auctor, modus et materia* of the book under discussion, and later ones used Aristotle's four causes; moreover, we can see this transition at work in Thomas' own commentaries.[2] The prologue to his commentary on John (a later work) takes the

[2] Ceslaus Spicq, *Esquisse d'une histoire de l'exégèse latine au moyen âge* (Paris: Vrin, 1944), 212-

Aristotelian approach, although instead of formal cause Thomas holds that the "ordo" of John's Gospel is the movement from contemplation of God's essence, through contemplation of his *virtus*, to being united to God.[3] This *ordo* is not the macro-structure (which is termed a *divisio textus* or a *distinctio*[4]), but something that permeates the whole Gospel, a structuring principle that is found recursively at different levels, which can be verified if one takes the trouble to collate the indications of the *divisio textus* found strategically placed through the commentary.

In a similar vein, commenting on chapter 5, which contains a miracle and a discourse, Thomas notes that it is customary in this Gospel that "to the teaching of Christ there is always joined a visible deed pertinent to the subject of the teaching, so that in this way invisible things can be made known from visible things."[5] The deed itself, even if miraculous, does not immediately lead to perfect faith, that is, faith that takes Christ as its end. Thomas notes that Nicodemus (who has seen many miracles), has imperfect faith, or rather opinion, about Jesus, and so needs teaching.[6] The teaching is often about the sacraments, the means by which we join ourselves to Christ.

Thus, when Thomas comes across sacraments in John's Gospel, he is expecting them to be part of a larger unit that involves movement from defective knowledge of God, through a call to faith based upon a miracle, to union with Christ through the sacrament.

The defective knowledge is an integral part of the process, and so, for instance, the Samaritans do not know God because they also worship idols (Thomas

218.

3 *Super Ioannem*, Prologus (M10).

4 *Super Romanos* Prologus (M11).

5 *In Johannem* c. 5, lect. 1 (M699), cf *In Johannem* c. 6, lect. 1 (M844).

6 *Super Ioannem*, 3.1 (M431), cf 7.5 (M1114)

cites “You worship what you do not know, we worship what we do know”), and yet this error is an integral part of the woman's journey to true faith, for it gives her the desire to ask Christ about true worship.[7] This movement from error to knowledge is typical of John's style.[8] It is Chauvet's reluctance to see this error as an integral part of the working of the sacraments, which leads him to discount the more material qualities of the sacramental elements in favour of their more symbolic ones.[9]

This accounts for both the advantages and disadvantages of using the text of the *Lectura* to understand the sacraments. Thomas comments on the Gospel as structured around the change that is taking place in the recipient of the sacraments, and comments on it as such, whereas in the *Summa* we tend to find scriptural or traditional assertions that the change takes place, and theological justifications of the possibility of such a change, given the causes that are operating. The disadvantage is that the cause of these changes is the object of John's contemplation, the unity of the divine essence, but we want to break down what John saw *totum simul* into its metaphysical (essence), physical (*virtus*) and ethical (union) aspects (or into similar divisions).[10] We shall see how hard it is to isolate one from the other two.

7.1.2 Chapter Six as an example of the move from the carnal to the spiritual

7.1.2.1 The miracle story as an introduction to the discourse

Chapter six begins with the crowds following Jesus, according to Thomas either because of his teaching, or because of the visible signs he has performed, or

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7 4.2 (M603). Cf John Milbank, “Truth and Vision”, in John Milbank and Catherine Pickstock, *Truth in Aquinas* (London: Routledge, 2001), 39.

8 Among the “notable characteristics” of John's style, Raymond Brown includes, “twofold or double meaning,” “misunderstanding” and “irony.” *The Gospel according to John* (Garden City NY: Doubleday, 1966), 1.cxxxv-cxxxvi.

9 Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 397.

10 *Super Ioannem* proœmium, (M9).

because they have been healed by him.[11] So this chapter begins, with some sort of quest for God or for Jesus already in place, but based upon a knowledge that is, as we shall soon see, defective, as is their union with God.

Thomas divides chapter six into two sections, a visible miracle and its effects on the people (6:1-25) and teaching by Jesus (6:26-72), which correspond to the Word's *virtus* over nature and the way we are sanctified by the Word and adhere to it through the sacraments that the *ordo* suggests should be there.

Thomas gives spiritual interpretations of the narrative.[12] These do not add any extra information to what is contained in the discourse, but enable us to receive that teaching in a way that is life-giving. If the feeding of the multitude is a gift that is meant to bring us into friendship and covenant union with Jesus, and if it is a prelude to greater, spiritual gifts, then this should be indicated in the manner of giving - either through the deliberate choice of Jesus or the providential arrangement of God - and thus the inspired evangelist selects those events and details that best serve the overall purpose of the Gospel.[13] Thomas makes his spiritual interpretations on these grounds, and on also identifications made elsewhere in scripture, such as "Your justice is like the mountains of God" or "All flesh is grass."[14]

I shall not consider each one individually, but the overall effect of all these allegories is to prepare us to trample down the carnal ways and thoughts beneath us

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[11] 6.1 (M843). (In this section, references to the *Lectura Super Ioannem* will be merely by chapter and lecture number, followed by the paragraph number from the Marietti edition.)

[12] But not of the discourse, in keeping with his principles. Michel Corbin, "Le pain de la vie: La lecture de Jean VI par S. Thomas d'Aquin," *Recherches de science religieuse* 65.1 (1977): 112-113. See also 2.1.1.2.

[13] Thus the Evangelist chooses to record only some miracles (6.1 (M844)), and mention the *qualitas temporis* (nature of the time) with regard to certain persons in order to convey their state of mind or the quality of their actions (3.1 (M427)).

[14] 6.1 (M845, M857).

and rise up to a spiritual understanding, and the allegory of the two crossings prepares us for the two reactions to Christ's teaching. When we move into the discourse, these ideas will be presented to us in the literal sense of the text; in fact, Thomas considers the first part of the discourse to consist in Jesus calling the crowds to move from a carnal to a spiritual understanding, that is, to the truth. Thomas is showing that the visible miracle, in its very materiality and in the singular details that are part of it, becomes part of the way we move from the carnal to the spiritual.

One of these interpretations needs a more detailed treatment: that of Philip and Andrew representing philosophy and the Law. Thomas explains that the "testing" way in which Christ asked Philip was meant to elicit a response through which others could be led into utterly certain knowledge of the sign that was to take place.[15] Now Philip, commenting that not even 200 denarii could buy enough bread, is proclaiming the insufficiency of all knowledge obtained by acquisition (either by experience or by contemplation) to bring people to the fulness of wisdom: not only is philosophy incapable of calling people back from error, it actually leads them into it.[16] Andrew, on the other hand, does not want to buy bread (wisdom), but looks to what is already there, the crude barley loaves of a mere boy symbolizing the Mosaic law that cannot bring anyone to perfection; besides, the Jews could not understand its true meaning as they were still veiled; nor can something as localised as the Law ("God is made known in Judah") lead the human race as a whole to the truth. Truth here is opposed to error and figure. Thus Thomas places the discourse on the bread of life in the context of the human search for God, utterly beyond any merely human

[15] 6.1 (M850).
[16] 6.1 (M854).

economy, and begun but frustrated until the coming of Christ.

7.1.2.2 The discourse itself

This is the structure of the bread of life discourse, according to Thomas.

Christ puts forward the truth of the spiritual food	He puts forward the truth	he shows the spiritual food	he rebuts their perverse cupidity 26
			he exhorts them to truth 27
		manifests *who* it is	28-29
	he insinuates its origin	the question of the Jews (they seek a sign)	30-31
		the response of Christ	32-33
	he teaches the manner of getting this spiritual food	the request for this food	34
		exposition (the way to get it)	what the bread is 35-36
			how to get it 37-40
He excludes contradiction	with respect to the murmuring crowds	the murmur about the origin of the spiritual food	41-52
		the quarrel about the eating of the spiritual food	53-60
	with respect to the doubting disciples		61-72

This division reflects the *ordo*. There is the invitation to contemplate lofty things (moving from bodily to spiritual food); seeing the power of the object of contemplation (its origin, which arises from a request for a *sign*); and the way of attaining the object, which, as we shall see, is through faith and love. The last two are repeated, as Christ proposes the truth and then deals with objections.[17]

Thomas realises that in the beginning "bread of life" refers to Wisdom, and later to the Eucharist, but he presents a structure that shows the unity of the theme of spiritual food. Whereas, Raymond Brown start with two discourses, one on Wisdom

[17] Michel Corbin finds the division reminiscent of a scholastic *disputatio*. "Le pain de la vie: La lecture de Jean VI par S. Thomas d'Aquin," *Recherches de science religieuse* 65/1 (1977), 110-111.

and the second on the Eucharist, but, as Michael Dauphinais remarks, "What he has distinguished, Brown has no ability to unite."[18] For Thomas, within the one discourse, the Eucharist remains instrumental; it is only raised as a response to an objection, or the answer to a contingent need.

7.1.2.3 Distinguishing the carnal and the spiritual

Thomas considers the Bread of Life discourse to begin at 6:26, where Christ rebuts the "perverse cupidity" of the crowds and tries to lead them to the truth.[19] As our examination of Thomas' text will gradually make clear, this is also a move from a "carnal" economy to a "spiritual" one. But this move is equivalent to coming to faith, and it requires faith because of the intrinsic difficulty involved. Thomas refers to this difficulty in pointing out that the move will be achieved by one who is designated not as Son of God but as Son of Man: it is the humanity of Christ that can reach us in our carnal ignorance and desires.[20] Of course, as Thomas repeatedly observes, the humanity of Christ does this only by virtue of being conjoined to the divinity. It is in this context that we can understand the instrumental role that the Eucharist plays.

We need to begin with two distinctions operative in the thought of Thomas: between bodily and spiritual food, and between a carnal and a spiritual mind. With the help of these distinctions, we can develop the ideas of a carnal and a spiritual economy.

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[18] Brown, *The Gospel of John*, 1.272-275, 284-291. Michael Dauphinais, "'And They Shall All Be Taught by God': Wisdom and the Eucharist in John 6" in Michael Dauphinais and Matthew Levering, edd., *Reading John with St. Thomas Aquinas: Theological Exegesis and Speculative Theology* (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 312-317, esp. 312-313.

[19] 6.3 (M892)

[20] 6.3 (M897).

Thomas begins his comments on the Bread of Life discourse by noting that the crowds seek Christ for the sake of bread, not because they have seen the signs - that is, for carnal rather than spiritual motives - and following Augustine he makes the point that such people still exist in his own age among Christians.[21] So Christ must lead them back to the truth. He does so by proposing to them spiritual - as opposed to bodily - food, first its *virtus*, then its *auctoritas*.

It is clear from this discussion that spiritual realities (in this case, spiritual "food") have ontological priority over material realities, which are like them and in a manner imitate them because they are caused by them and derived from them. Nonetheless, the very indefinite way Thomas talks of spiritual food ("whatever it may be") reminds us that, from our point of view, it is bodily food, as that which sustains the body, that we know first. But bodily food sustains the body by being corrupted - and therefore it cannot endure to eternal life - whereas spiritual food changes the one who receives it (quoting Augustine's *Confessions* here) and does not perish, and so can endure to eternal life. This is the food we should "work": that is, seek by working or merit by working; this is the food that should be at the heart of our economy.[22]

Thomas then tells us, based on three scriptural quotes, what the bread of life is:

- God himself, as the truth to be contemplated and the goodness to be loved;
- obedience to the divine commandments;
- Christ.

We notice here that the interpretations begin with the most spiritual and gradually become more corporeal, but always with the spiritual in control, for when

[21] 6.3 (M893-894)
[22] 6.3 (M895)

Thomas finally gets to citing "My flesh is real food and my blood is real drink," he qualifies this as "only insofar as it is conjoined to the Word of God, who is the food by which the angels live." At this stage Thomas is respecting both the sense of the text and his own theology and is much more interested in the Word as spiritual food.[23]

Thomas notes that Christ put forward a similar distinction between spiritual and bodily drink in chapter 4, to which we now turn.

Here Thomas is reconciling the apparent contradiction between Jesus' claim that those who drink the water he gives will not thirst *in aeternum* and Wisdom's claim (Sir 24:29) "Those who drink me will still thirst." The second explanation he gives involves a comparison between the thirst for temporal and spiritual things, and is worth quoting at length.

> [A] temporal thing, when possessed, causes thirst not for itself, but for some other thing; a spiritual thing takes away thirst for an other thing, and causes thirst for itself. The reason for this is that, before it is possessed a temporal thing is reckoned (*aestimatur*) to be of great value (*magni pretii*) and sufficient; but after it is possessed, because it is found to be not so great nor sufficient to quiet the desire, it not only does not satisfy the desire but rather the desire is moved to having some other thing. But the spiritual thing is not known unless it is possessed (Rev 2:17 "No one knows, except the one who receives"). And so when it is not possessed it does not move the desire; but when it is possessed and known, then it delights the affect and moves the desire, not indeed to having something else, but, because it is imperfectly grasped [*percipitur* can mean both "seized" and "understood"] on account of the imperfection of the receiver, it moves [the desire] that it might be possessed perfectly.[24]

Thomas goes on to note that in glory we shall possess perfectly and so we shall not thirst *in aeternum*.

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[23] I 6.3 (M895). While angels desire to feast on the Word of God, they do not desire to receive the Eucharist, which would be impossible for them. ST III.80.2.

[24] *Super Ioannem* 4.2 (M586)

In this beautiful contrast between restlesss temporal and restful spiritual desire, a particularly important phrase is *magni pretii*, indicating not only that we are concerned with an economy, but also one in which the operative desire is charity.[25] The inordinate love of temporal goods, based on a false estimation of their worth, is a misleading subsitute for charity.[26] It would be easy to see how such a false estimation would lead to an entirely false economy.[27]

Of course, until food and the stomach are eschatologically destroyed, the bodily economy does not disappear. Thomas approvingly cites Augustine's reproach of monks who cited John 6:27 as justification for not performing manual labour. We must keep working bodily to keep the body alive, but all this activity is "accessory"to the spiritual economy.[28]

A question arises: given that the true value of a spiritual thing cannot be known until it is possessed, what value can motivate a decision to enter the new (and true) economy? Thomas comments on chapter 6 will show us.

Given the threefold spiritual nature of the bread of life, we might expect it to be given by the Son of *God*, but Thomas pointedly notes that the text says, "the Son of *Man*." It needs to be so, for our human nature, weakened by sin, disdains the spiritual and is unable to take it. Thus the Son of God took flesh to refresh (or remake) us through it - with authority granted to him by the Father.[29]

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[25] "Magni pretii" occurs only here and at ST I-II.26.3 cor. Thomas often uses the ablative *magno pretio* (indicating the cost at which something is purchased), especially when citing 1 Cor 6:20.

[26] While Thomas, commenting on Eph 5:5, shows that, although there is a similarity between avarice and idolatry, there is also a significant difference, he nonetheless argues that avarice is a spiritual sin, because it is grounded not in sensual desire but in the apprehensions of the soul. ST II-II.118.5 ad 4 and 118.6 cor.

[27] A little further on in his comment on ch. 4, the connection is implied but not stated between thirst and toil (*labor*), the two reasons the woman offers for seeking the water Jesus offers. An economy based upon a thirst that cannot be satisfied will therefore lead to much pointless toil. See 4.2 (M589)

[28] 6.3 (M896), cf 6.5 (M639-640).

[29] 6.3 (M897-898)

The Jews know enough to realise that something material cannot give eternal life, so they ask about the works *of God*.[30] But Thomas has prepared us for the answer; although bodily (to meet our needs), the Son of Man has *auctoritas*, and so what we must do, the "works of God," is faith in the one he has sent.[31] The role of faith will be explained at length later, but Thomas does make it clear that this faith is faith informed by love, that is, "faith in" which makes its object its final end and the principle of its actions. Only God is worthy of such faith.[32] In one sense we have here the basic Thomistic teaching on merit, but it is articulated in different terms for a different problematic.

Auctoritas is a significant factor in Thomas' sacramental theology. When Thomas, following the text, finally takes up a proper discussion of the Eucharist, he immediately presents it under four aspects: its species, the *auctoritas* of the one who instituted it, its truth and its usefulness. These aspects are linked to the text of the verse, but it is clear that they represent Thomas' own theology, a variation on Aristotle's four-fold causality: the institutor is the efficient cause, its usefulness corresponds to the final cause, the species to the material cause, and we are left with truth taking the place of the formal cause.[33] And, from here on, rather than try to develop the theology in an order dictated entirely by the text, I shall take each of these causes separately, starting with *auctoritas*, because it is the main topic before we come to the discussion of the Eucharist as such.

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30 6.3 (M900).
31 6.3 (M898).
32 6.3 (M901-902).
33 6.6 (M960).

7.1.3 The efficient cause of the Eucharist: the *auctoritas* of Christ

For Thomas, the question of *auctoritas*, with its associations of authority, origin, institution, empowerment, pervades the whole Gospel. Repeatedly Thomas comments that a given passage contradicts the claims of Arius, because in it Christ is seen to have an authority or power that can only belong to God.[34] Thomas explores it here in terms of the metaphor given in the text, to come from heaven.[35] Much of what Thomas says applies to Christ himself rather than the sacraments. What concerns us here is that to come and learn from God is to come to the Word, which Thomas expressly reminds us is the *Verbum spirans Amorem*: the authority of Christ is linked not only to his coming from the Father, but also his ability to give the Spirit.

Corbin has claimed that Thomas presents Jesus' discourse as though it were the lecture of a master in Paris, but Thomas does so to help us follow the thread of the argument in the Gospel text. And so when, at the end of this dispute about authority, Thomas analyses Christ's words in logical terms, this gives an important insight into what Thomas thinks is going on. There is:

1. a minor premise, "I am the bread of life;"
2. a major premise, "That bread descends from heaven which gives life to the world;"
3. a conclusion, "I am the bread which came down from heaven."[36]

The positing of both the minor and the major is broken down into two steps: the manifestation of the *propositum*, and then leading from it to the *intentum*, what he wants to say.

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[34] 1.1 (M61-62); 1.5 (M162-127); 1.14 (M262); 3.3 (M477); 5.4 (M765-769); 6.5 (M935); 6.7 (M978); 9.4 (M1355); 10.5 (M1450-1451); 13.3 (M1794); 14.2 (M1879); 14.3 (M1888); 14.3 (M1895); 17.1 (M2181-2183); 17.5 (M2248).

[35] The spiritual realm, and not just the upper air whence came the manna. 6.4 (M909)

[36] 6.6 (M949).

For the minor, the *propositum* is the conclusion of the argument so far about authority; "the one who believes in me has eternal life." But, explains Thomas, to believe in someone (which involves both intellect and will) is to take (*sumere*) him into oneself, which could be considered as eating him. And so Christ can speak of himself as the bread of life, which he does.[37]

For the major, the *propositum* is manifested from its contrary. Those who ate the "bread from heaven" that Moses gave have died, and so, says Thomas, this cannot be bread from heaven, for bread from heaven would have the property that anyone who eats it would not die (*pace* the Gloss, which has the Lord pointing to himself as he says "This is the bread coming down from heaven").[38]

Now Christ can come to his logical conclusion: speaking in general, he is the living bread which has come down from heaven (for he is not merely human) and thus gives eternal life through "spiritual" eating.[39] More specifically, his body is an organ of his divinity, and it also can - in the power of the Word - give life. Christ gives his flesh for the life of the world, and this through the sacrament of the Eucharist.[40]

The structure of this syllogism indicates the place of the Eucharist. The major premise, the question it seeks to answer, is about the bread from heaven. It is about human desire, twisted after the fall (*perversa cupiditas*) and focused on earthly things (represented by bread). Christ takes that desire and gets to its heart, a desire for eternal life. Then he puts forward himself as the one who brings eternal life, which Thomas makes the minor premise. The conclusion, that Christ is the goal of

[37] 6.6 (M950).
[38] 6.6 (M953-955)
[39] 6.6 (M956-958).
[40] 6.6 (M959).

this desire is immediately followed by an invitation to eat Christ in a bodily way - but if we are surprised at this, Thomas has dealt with this surprise already: the true bread will be given by the Son of *Man*, because our desires are focussed on earthly things. It is the Eucharist that enables a realignment of our desire, and a restructuring of our economy. The spiritual economy does not run parallel to the bodily economy, but the bodily economy is subsumed into the spiritual economy and becomes "accessory" to it. Thus the sacrament of the Eucharist will radically revise our virtues.

7.1.4 The material cause of the Eucharist: the *species* of food and drink

With regard to the Eucharist as "bread" and "food", we can see all four steps: the initial, carnal desires; the logic of perfection that these indicate something spiritual; the transformation of the desire; and the new order of values this brings. Then we shall mention two other matters associated with the presence of the body of Christ under the *species* of bread.

7.1.4.1 The starting point: our attachment to food

As for the initial state, when the people ask for a sign, Thomas uses the authority of Chrysostom and Augustine to show that it can be taken in two ways. Chrysostom presumes that the crowds are stuck at the carnal level, and want simply to move from one carnal economy to another. Christ is asking for their faith, and the crowd see this desire of his as their opportunity. They will trade their allegiance - acknowledge his *auctoritas* - for bread.[41]

Augustine's explanation presumes that the crowd is not so carnal and

[41] 6.3 (M904)

actually wants food that endures to eternal life. But this would be something greater than what Moses provided, and so they need a sign that is greater than any Moses performed, a sign so that they are sure of Christ's origin: “We know that God spoke to Moses; but we don't know where this man is from.”[42] Augustine's interpretation does not invalidate Chrysostom's, but shows that the “bread” of the Eucharist can still work for those who have left the carnal economy behind - we do not reach a stage where the sacraments are useless.

7.1.4.2 The logic of perfection and the superiority of the spiritual food

As we saw, when Thomas first talks of spiritual food, he lets us know that it is the primary referent of “food,” but nonetheless known to us by a logic of perfection from the bodily food we eat. This same logic recurs when Thomas tells us what spiritual food is, for the three meanings cited - God, obedience to the commandments, and Christ - correspond, roughly, to the three parts of the *Summa*, and Thomas (or someone else) can prove that these are necessary for spiritual life without using the term “food.” And later, when Christ first calls himself the bread of life, Thomas considers the properties of earthly bread (in this mortal life, it staves off death), and then points out that in the life to come, where there is no death, such bread will not be needed, but nonetheless we shall still need a source of life, the fount of life and wisdom; and for that reason the Word of God is principally the bread of life; his flesh (or the Eucharist) is the bread of life in a derivative sense, drawing its power from the Word to which it is joined.[43]

We also see this logic when Thomas comments that we can make our own

[42] 6.3 (M905)
[43] 6.4 (M914)

the carnal request of the Jews, “Give us this bread always,” for we say exactly the same words and mean it in a spiritual sense, as we do each day when we pray, “Give us this day our daily bread.”[44] That Thomas should then add: “because we cannot live without this bread” would seem to be to justify the use of the term “bread”, rather than to prove the vital necessity of what is sought.

7.1.4.3 To be drawn by delight

He explicitly parallels this request to that of the Samaritan woman for the living water. We have already noted that in reference to this passage Thomas comments that we cannot desire spiritual gifts until we have tasted them. But a little earlier he has said that we must ask for spiritual gifts: with reference to adults he says, “for grace is not given to anyone without petition and desire. Whence we say that in the justification of the wicked free will is needed for the detestation of sin and the desire for grace,” a position given in more detail in the *Summa*.[45] Thomas does not even draw our attention to the apparent contradiction, but goes on to present the woman asking for the water, asking in a carnal way although it had been offered to her spiritually. And if we follow Augustine's interpretation, the misunderstanding continues.[46] The real husband is the intellect, the five previous husbands are the five senses which, along with her currrent adulterous man, the misled reason, lead her to a carnal understanding. This spiritual reading, of course, invites us in our carnality to

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[44] 6.4 (M912) Thomas, of course, allows that “bread” could also be material bread, or material necessities in general. However, the way that the Lord's prayer teaches us to pray for bread, so that it serves our spiritual life rather than being an end in itself, is a spiritual and not a carnal way of prayer. *In Orationem Dominicam* 4; *Super Matthaeum* 6.3 (M586); *Catena in Matthaeum* 6.7, ST II-II.83.9

[45] 4.2 (M578), cf ST I-II.113.

[46] 4.2 (M5909). Thomas represents Augustine as holding that the Lord's intent in referring to the woman's husband was figurative (just as the water had been). Thomas follows Augustine's line, but as he is also following Chrysostom's more literal interpretation, it is not clear whether he is giving us two literal readings of the text or, more likely, a literal reading and an allegorical reading.

identify with the woman. Thus Thomas indicates that through these misunderstandings and misplaced desires the woman is coming to a deeper recognition of who Jesus is and is being taught how to pray.

A little later Thomas introduces the term "prevenient grace" to explain what is happening. The Lord says to the disciples offering him food that he has food of which the disciples know nothing, and Thomas explicitly draws our attention to the identity of the referent of this food and the drink mentioned earlier.[47] Just as the Lord created an occasion to talk of spiritual things under the similitude of water by asking the woman for a drink, so also here he creates an occasion to talk of spiritual things under the similitude of food when the disciples offer him food. Then, to account for the lack of parallelism (as to who asks first), Thomas notes that we cannot offer God food (ask for salvation) unless a prevenient grace precedes: "He himself first seeks who makes us seek through prevenient grace." Our carnal requests, and our carnal responses to God's requests, are prevenient grace. The prevenient grace leads us to ask for something that we do not understand, and to look to Christ as to someone who will be useful to us. Unwittingly, it would seem, we turn away from sin and turn to God, and so are open to grace which is not given except to those who are open to it. The response of the disciples has been prefigured by the woman who, transformed by grace, leaves behind her earthy desires (symbolized by the water jug) to preach the Gospel.[48]

Thomas has prepared us for this earlier in his comments on "No-one can come to me unless the Father draw him," citing Augustine that one's own delight

[47] 4.4 (M644) "quia idem intelligitur per cibum et potum." This identification is worth noting, because previously the living water has been identified as the grace of the Holy Spirit, and the food as doing the Father's will: these two would be inseparable for Thomas, just as in commenting on the food that endures to eternal life Thomas says that this could be either God himself or (with reference to this very passage) obedience to the divine commandments.

[48] 4.3 (M625)

draws each one.[49] Thomas carefully distinguishes this drawing from a violent and coercive dragging, but allows that the non-violent drawing has several modes. Some are drawn by rational persuasion, some by the Father's majesty or some through their delight in the truth. But they are also drawn through God's interior instinct that brings them to believe. Indeed, so much is this from God that we must ascribe to the divine decision that one is attracted and another is not.[50] These rather abstract remarks need to be fleshed out by considering the woman at the well, or the crowds who have seen the miracles and are now hungering for bread, and the way Jesus works with their desires. Indeed, later on Thomas, following Augustine, allows that Christ might rightly be called a seducer, ironically re-interpreting an accusation made against him, for he seduces people away from falsehood into the path of truth.[51]

7.1.4.4 The new economy

As a last illustration, when comparing the need for bodily and for spiritual food, he supports his claim that we cannot live bodily life without food with two scripture quotes, the first being Lam 1:11: "They gave whatever valuables (*pretiosa*) they had for food."[52] Thomas did not have to use this quote to express the mere biological fact - the second quote, "Bread to strengthen the human heart" (Ps 103:5) would have sufficed. The citation therefore is asking us to consider the necessity of food in a way that goes beyond biology, namely, that when it comes to the crunch, as in a city under siege, a thing has value (*pretium*) if it can be exchanged for food. Possibly it is an *inclusio* recalling Philip's mention of 200 denarii, which prompted

[49] 6.5 M935.
[50] 6.5 (M935-937)
[51] 7.2 (M1030-1032).
[52] 6.7 (M968)

Thomas to say that Philip was slow and stupid. "And therefore he suggests the manner by which all people could feed (*pascere*) them, namely, by money."[53] Christ, Thomas notes, is so poor that he does not have even 200 denarii, and the implication is that Christ, being spiritually-minded, does not concern himself with his standing in the economy that the witless Philip is immersed in. Returning to the text at hand, to support the need for spiritual food, Thomas quotes Dt 8:3, "The human being does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God." The implication waiting to be drawn is that for the person who is aware of the spiritual realm, things will be of ultimate value if they enable us to be nourished by God's word. The existence of spiritual food, once it is understood as food, creates a new scale of values - as we have seen, what was reckoned to be *magni pretii* turns out not to be so - and so a new economy. In this economy, charity, love of things *magni pretii*, becomes possible.

7.1.4.5 Another aspect of bread - unity

Here we should mention two other points that Thomas, going beyond the text at hand, raises here which he will use in later discussion.

The first concerns the *species*, which is bread. We have already investigated at length the use of "bread" as a way of meeting us in our carnality, but here Thomas gives another meaning: bread is made from many grains, so through the Eucharist we become one in the body of Christ which is the Church (cf Rom 12:5), and thus the use of bread is *conveniens* for this sacrament.[54]

The second concerns its truth. Christ does not say "signifies my flesh" but

[53] 6.1 (M852)
[54] 6.6 (M960).

"is my flesh." The flesh is really there. And Thomas notes the that use of "flesh" rather than "body" for Christ's passion and death was a result of his weakness, and this sacrament is "rememorative of the Lord's passion."[55]

This then provides a useful link to the consideration of the usefulness of the sacrament, because, as really containing *Christus passus* (not, we could note, *Christus patiens* - it is a reminder, not a re-enactment), it contains all the effects of his passion, which include both, on the one hand, the destruction of death and the restoration of life (the eternal life so often mentioned in John 6) and, on the other hand, propitiation for our sins, which John 6 does not mention.[56]

7.1.5 The final cause of the Eucharist: eternal life in community

7.1.5.1 The necessity of this sacrament for life: sacramental and spiritual eating

The discussion about the material cause ("food"), leads into a discussion of the necessity of this sacrament, and here we get a set of distinctions. Spiritual eating of this sacrament is necessary for all; sacramental eating is not necessary for infants, but it is necessary for adults, at least *in voto*; and reception of both the body and blood under their separate sacramental forms is not necessary, for the one who receives the living body of Christ receives also the blood by concomitance.[57] Reception of the sacrament *in voto* will be covered in a chapter eight; spiritual eating is given much closer treatment in the next sub-section, on the usefulness of the sacrament.

The sacrament is useful because it brings eternal life. This is obvious,

[55] 6.6 (M962).
[56] 6.6 (M963).
[57] 6.7 (M969-970).

because "the one who eats this bread has in himself Christ, who is *true God and eternal life*."[58] This includes eternal life for the body as well as the soul, and there is a real congruity here between the sacrament and its results, for, citing Augustine: "The word resuscitates souls, but the Word made flesh gives life to bodies," and this sacrament contains the Word according to its divinity and according to the truth of its flesh.[59]

But Thomas will not let us gain eternal life from a mere bodily action. Spiritual reception is necessary for eternal life: it is not sufficient to receive sacramentally, to take the *ipsum sacramentum*; one must reach right through to the *res sacramenti*, which, in this case, is twofold: the *res contenta et signata* and the *res signata et non contenta*.[60] Care needs to be taken here. Although Thomas has distinguished three objects, we shall see that they do not correspond to the *sacramentum tantum*, *res et sacramentum* and *res sacramenti*; moreover, he is taking sacramental and spiritual reception as terms widely used in the schools.[61] The *sacramentum ipsum* here corresponds to the body and blood of Christ present *ex vi conversionis*, (in other contexts referred to as the *res et sacramentum*): this is the object of sacramental reception, and it is received by those who have sufficient faith to intend to receive it and somehow make us of it.[62] The *res sacramenti* is the effect of receiving the *sacramentum ipsum*. Here it is twofold: as contained, it is the whole Christ (*integer Christus*);[63] as not contained, it is the *corpus Christi mysticum*.[64]

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58 6.7 (M972), citing 1 John 5:20.
59 6.7 (M973)
60 6.7 (M972)
61 ST III.80.1 cor, 80.4 cor , cf *Scriptum* 4.9.1.1.3 cor, *In I Corinthios* 11.7 (M698).
62 ST III.80.3 ad 2 and ad 3.
63 The "whole Christ" was mentioned when explaining how those who receive only one *species* nonetheless fulfil the command to "eat my flesh and drink my blood:" the other reality is there through "concomitance." 6.7 (M972).
64 The same division of the *res sacramenti* is given at ST III.80.4 cor.

7.1.5.2 Moving from a visible mission to an invisible one

We can analyse what is happening here in terms of visible and invisible missions, or of gift object and the spirit of the gift.

The Eucharistic presence is an extension of the visible mission, for the divinity of the Word is present along with the visible body. The one who receives the sacrament in faith, who eats sacramentally, receives the body of Christ, for that is what is given to him (albeit as a means of reaching through to the divinity), and so at this level it is still the visible mission. For it to become an invisible mission, the believer must be joined (*conjungere*) to the Word, which can only happen through faith and charity;[65] anything less does not have God as such as the object, but rather God as known through natural reason, and so ultimately only the effects of God.[66] This act of being joined to Christ transforms the believer into Christ;[67] and she becomes a member of Christ, is divinised, and is intoxicated with divinity - this is what is contained in the idea of spiritual food and drink. To use terms from elsewhere, the visible mission becomes an invisible mission, and configuration through sacramental eating becomes conformation through spiritual eating. However, even though this approach mentions our incorporation into Christ , it does not talk of the relations between those who are incorporated into Christ, that make the assembly of members a body. Thomas introduces this aspect simply by moving from the *res* signified and contained to the *res* signified but not contained, which with the tradition he states to be the mystical body. The unity of the mystical body comes from charity, which comes from the Holy Spirit, who is the pledge of our

[65] 6.7 (M972), cf ST I-II.62.3 cor, where charity is the union to God as known through faith and desired through hope.
[66] Cf ST I-II.62.1 cor, ad 3, I-II.62.2.
[67] The transformative power of charity is also mentioned at ST I-II.62.3 cor.

eternal heritage.[68] Thus, if we persevere, also in this way the Eucharist brings us eternal life.

This does not seem satisfying. But we are helped by a later treatment of spiritual and sacramental eating, where membership of the mystical body takes priority.[69] For spiritual eating goes beyond the real body to what it symbolizes, the mystical body. One is joined to the mystical body in faith and charity, charity causes divine indwelling, and so on. On the other hand, sacramental eating also brings this about, but only if it is accompanied by spiritual eating (not impeded by fiction) .

The jump from the real body of Christ to his mystical body presents no difficulty for Thomas, because that is the true spiritual sense of the sacrament. He has constantly warned us that we must take things spiritually, which involves reading them mystically, and will do so again regarding the disciples who find this a hard saying, because they take flesh literally and not spiritually. He has given this spiritual reading to us: bread achieves its unity from many grains, which symbolizes the formation of the body of Christ, the Church (whose unity is stated literally elsewhere - he cites Romans 12:5). He has also pointed out that the Jews are arguing because they have not yet received the "food of concord," which shows that they are still carnal.[70]

7.1.5.2.1 *Corpus mysticum* and *corpus verum*

A close study by Henri de Lubac has shown that by the 12th century there had been a change from the usage of the patristic period, so that *corpus verum* now referred to the Eucharistic body of Christ and *corpus mysticum* to the Church, and

[68] See later at 7.2.4.
[69] 6.7 (M976)
[70] 6.7 (M966)

not the other way around.[71] Chauvet complains that this disconnects the Church from the sacrament, so that its production is left to the juridical sphere. Whatever the rightness of this claim (which we shall take up again in chapter nine), we should first of all note that, for Thomas, "the glory of our heavenly homeland is the *res non contenta et significata* in all the sacraments," and - as we have seen - an eschatological reference is an integral part of any sacrament.[72] Therefore the unity of the Church symbolized in the Eucharist is its eschatological unity, the perfection of charity. For Thomas, while the perfection of charity, unity and glory is still awaited, the sacrament so re-orders our desires that even now an imperfect charity is achieved as the *res sacramenti*.[73] The order in which Thomas considers the Eucharist to operate reflects the order of charity, by which we love God first, and others as loved by God.[74]

The unity of the Church is not mentioned in John 6, but Thomas considers it an integral part of eternal life and so introduces it; the Aristotelian categories of substance and accident, however, are not mentioned at all in his comments on this chapter.[75]

7.1.5.3 The Eucharist as gift: moving from food to *convivium*

We can appreciate this better if we consider the body of Christ as the gift object. In a state of gift exchange, the gift object is always less important than what

[71] Henri de Lubac, *Corpus mysticum: the Eucharist and the Church in the Middle Ages: historical survey*, 2nd ed., tr. Gemma Simmonds with Richard Price and Christopher Stephens, (London: SCM, 2006)

[72] *Scriptum* 4.8.1.1.3 obj 2, cf ST III.60.2 cor. This does not rule out the possibility of another *res significata et non contenta*, such as the burial of Christ in baptism - as this is not primarily intended, but removal of original sin is, baptism takes place in water, not in earth. *Scriptum* 4.3.1.3.1 ad 4, cf 4.3.1.4.2 cor, 3 cor.

[73] The corpus of all eight articles of ST III.79.

[74] ST II-II.25.12 cor, II-II.26.1-2.

[75] In the commentary on ch.6 we get *substantia* twice: once in a quote from Hebrews (6.3 (M898)), and once with reference to Arius (6.5 (M935)); *accidens* does not occur at all.

it symbolizes, and thus a gift object cannot simply be taken "literally," it must always be read. Commenting on the "hard saying," Thomas makes it clear that he is not denying the real presence of the flesh of Christ in the sacrament of the altar, but as "the Lord says that he will *give* himself to them as spiritual food," the appropriate sense of his words here is spiritual, not carnal.[76] Although in one sense one moves from the bodily to the spiritual in understanding the body of Christ as the instrument through which his divinity is also given to us, this reading on its own still sticks too closely to the literal; the logical connection between the two is too automatic. The Spirit needs freedom to blow.

We can also recall that the body of Christ here is not given to us "under its proper *species*,"[77] but rather as bread and food, precisely in order to relativise the place these things have in our carnal economy and enable a spiritual economy (and we can consider an economy as a body). As I made clear earlier, it is not the mere body of Christ that acts as a symbol or instrument in this sacrament, but the body of Christ precisely as symbolized under the form of bread: it cannot be taken simply as his body as organ of the divinity, but the body *as bread* as the organ of divinity - a further reading is demanded. "Food," "bread" and "eating" are not absolutely necessary for our encounter with the Word.

It might also be said that here, and also in the *Summa*, Thomas reads the Eucharist as a sign of Church unity almost entirely from the imagery of the many grains of wheat making one loaf, which does not have a strong appeal to most

[76] 6.8 (M992) My emphasis.

[77] Cf ST III.79.2 obj 3 and ad 3.. Thomas objects that the body under an alien species is a lesser reality than the body in its proper species, and so the reception of the former cannot cause the enjoyment of the latter, and thus future glory cannot be an effect of the Eucharist. His response, of course, is that the alien species belongs to the sacrament precisely as sacrament, which as an instrumental cause can act beyond its own species. But it should also remind us that the alien species is for the sake of us, *collapsi ad corpora*.

western Christians these days. An image that could appeal to us more is that of becoming one through sharing one bread. There is potential for this in Thomas' use of the word *convivium* to describe the Eucharist, both in the Magnificat antiphon and in his comments on the last chapter of John.[78] Now, a *convivium* is a shared meal, and Thomas always uses the word in that sense. In particular, in *De Regno* he notes that to increase their power tyrants sometimes ban weddings and *convivia*, which are things that may foster familiarity among the people;[79] in his commentary on the *Politics* he notes that both the Cretans and the Spartans had the practice of public *convivia* to foster a sense of community: the Cretans provided it all from community funds, but the Spartan custom, whereby each person had to bring some food, ended up destroying the poor (like a potlatch).[80] Again, he notices with approval that Job's sons include their sisters in their *convivia*.[81] Christ shows his peace for Judas by both kiss and *convivium*.[82] A *convivium*, therefore, is a sort of beneficium (even if it is mutual), because something material is given (food), but what is really given is the relationship between those present. It is a Maussian symbol that produces or strengthens *alliance*.

Thomas notes that the meal on the shore of the lake was a *convivium*, and even a *familiare convivium*, as if to emphasise the sort of bonds it is trying to foster.[83] Everyone is expected to bring food, but (unlike the Spartan banquet) this does not embarrass us, because God gives us what we can bring to the banquet. Thomas interprets the *convivium* in two ways: ecclesially, in which what is brought are people, brought in by evangelization; and morally, where we bring in the good works

78 21.2 (M2597-2602)
79 *De Regno* 1.4.
80 *Commentary on Aristotle's* Politics, 2.14.9.
81 *Super Iob*, cap. 1.
82 *In Psalmos* 3.1.
83 21.2 (M2597)

that are the fruit of the grace given to us.[84] Thomas leaves it to us to realise that either interpretation can apply to the Eucharist, but the hints are strongly there. In the ecclesial banquet, the fish represents Christ offered for us on the cross; in the moral banquet, it is required "that we use well the *gratia* granted to us," and, as all the mendicant theologians agreed, "eucharistia" meant "bona gratia."[85]

7.1.6 The formal cause of the Eucharist: truth

The usefulness of the sacrament corresponds to its final cause; prompted by "My flesh truly is food . . . ," Thomas then goes on to consider that which takes the place of its formal cause, namely, its truth. The discussion is brief, picking up the meaning of truth he gave earlier (that Christ's body is not figuratively but truly present), and then giving explanations from Chrysostom and Augustine. Chrysostom holds that, since the human being is principally the soul and secondarily the body, food for the soul is true food. Augustine explains that true food and drink truly satisfy - and the body and blood of Christ lead us to glory, where there is neither hunger nor thirst.[86]

7.1.6.1 The threefold truthfulness of the Eucharist

We should look at these explanations in terms of the meanings of truth we have had earlier. Considering the characterisation with regard to "true light," the first explanation matches truth as opposed to the figure; the third, truth as opposed to participation, for only union to the divinity gives us glory. We could identify the

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84 21.2 (M2599-M2601 and M2602)

85 P.-M. Gy, "La documentation sacramentale de Thomas d'Aquin," *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 80.3 (1996):427.

86 6.7 (M974)

second with truth as opposed to error, for the soul is fed on truth, but the parallel is not close enough. A better fit is found if we say that true food for human beings picks up the truth about human beings, that the soul has priority over the body (not in a grossly dualist way, but in that the soul gives life to the body and makes it a body in the true sense of the word), and the Eucharist, in leading us into a true economy which is spiritual and not carnal is working at that level of truth which is in the soul and which is opposed to error and vice.

We can also match these three ways with the three aspects of Christ mentioned in the exposition of "full of grace and truth": the first way corresponds to the body and blood, the second to the soul, and the third to the divinity. We could also link them with the past, present and future aspects of the Eucharist as recalled in the Magnificat antiphon of Corpus Christi: through the flesh we are reminded of his passion; through his soul our soul is filled with grace; through his divinity we are given the pledge of future glory (which, as we shall see, is the Holy Spirit).

7.1.6.2 Truth and origin: the need for faith

Thomas continually characterises the disputed points of the Bread of Life discourse in terms of two concepts: the *virtus* of spiritual food and its origin (sometimes expressed as the *auctoritas* of the one who institutes it). Thus as the more strictly theological part of the discourse comes to a close, it is not surprising that these two issues arise, as part of a syllogism:

1. the major: the one who eats my flesh and drinks my blood is joined (*conjungere*) to me;

2. the minor: the one who is joined to me has eternal life;

3. the conclusion: the one who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life.[87]

The major Thomas expounds in terms of spiritual and sacramental eating, in a passage we have already discussed.

The minor takes up "Just as the living Father sent me . . . ," and interprets it according to Christ's divine nature and his human nature.[88] Eating implies some sort of participation, and we can participate (to a limited extent, of course) in the divine nature by participating in (eating) the Son. We can also participate in his human nature, that is, as graced, although once again the parallel is not exact. Interestingly, because of the text ("misit"), Thomas reminds us that Christ's union comes about as the result of a mission, which is the incarnation.

Now, says Thomas, Christ comes to his conclusions. As regards his origin, he is "the bread that comes down from heaven," both in his divinity, and in his humanity (formed by the Holy Spirit), and so superior to the manna, which could not give life.[89] And as regards his *virtus*, "the one who eats this bread will live for ever," which is the principally intended conclusion.[90]

We said at the beginning of this chapter that there were three things necessary to inspire charity: knowledge, likeness and goodness. Our reading of Thomas' comments on John 6 have focussed mainly on the acquisition of knowledge through faith. To enter into the spiritual economy of the gift we must know that it exists and that it exerts a claim more powerful than the claim of the goods of a carnal

87 6.7 (M975).
88 6.7 (M977).
89 6.7 (M980).
90 6.7 (M979, M981)

economy. Hence three important themes of Thomas' exposition: the authority of Christ (because faith is only possible in one who has authority), the unknowability of the spiritual world, and Christ's use of the material to bring us to the spiritual, an assistance towards faith for those *collapsi ad corpora*. We now need to see both that there is a likeness between us and this spiritual world, a likeness given in hope, and that this spiritual world is exceedingly good and thus worthy of love, in other words that it comes from a God who loves us both gratuitously and at a great price. And thus we move to consider the Eucharist as the pledge of future glory, and as the site of the renewal of the memory of the passion.

7.2 The Eucharist and hope

7.2.1 The words over the chalice

When dealing with the formula of consecration, Thomas devotes one article to the words over the bread, and one to the words over the cup. Although the former deals with certain technicalities common to both, nonetheless it is only half as long as the latter.[91] One of the reasons is that the formula for the consecration of the chalice is longer, and this itself is the second objection: if the bread is consecrated with a simple *Hoc enim est corpus meum*, why do the properties of the blood need to be included before the words of consecration take effect? In his response, Thomas claims that the body is the subject of the passion (and implicitly is passive in the passion), and is thus less appropriately linked with the effects of the passion than the blood. The blood, consecrated by itself, expressly symbolizes the separation of the blood from the body in the passion, and thus mention of the effect of the passion is

[91] 736 words and five objections in ST III.78.2 as opposed to 1406 words and nine objections in ST III.78.3.

better (*potius*) included in the consecration of the blood.[92] Thomas is not quite saying that the blood is the active element in the passion, but as sacraments work by signifying, it would seem that the blood has some sort of priority in the way the Eucharist operates.

Thomas justifies the mention of these properties as part of the formula of consecration, first of all by appealing to the rite itself and the Lucan version of the words, then by showing their *convenientia*, that is, that the properties mentioned designate "the power (*virtus*) of blood poured out in the passion, which is at work in this sacrament." *Novi et aeterni testamenti* indicates that through the blood we enter into our eternal inheritance; *mysterium fidei* that the blood justifies us through faith; *qui pro vobis et pro multis effundetur in remissionem peccatorum* that the blood removes the impediments to the previous two effects.[93] These three effects correspond to the familiar future glory, present grace and past passion. In the following section we shall consider the remission of sins; here I want to consider the new and eternal *testamentum* that gives us hope of a likeness to God.

7.2.2 *Testamentum*

7.2.2.1 The specific difference of *testamentum*: heritage and death

We saw in chapter five that there are three words expressing alliance: *foedus*, *pactum* and *testamentum*. Thomas is most specific about what *testamentum* entails in his commentary on the words over the chalice in 1 Corinthians.[94] He notes that *testamentum* is used in a general sense for any *pactum* that is confirmed by

[92] ST III.78.3 ad 2, cf ad 7.
[93] ST III.78.3 cor. All three effects are backed up with scriptural quotes that explicitly mention blood. The Leonine edition reads the *lectio difficilior* and has "pro multis aliis".
[94] *In I Ad Corinthios*, 11.6 (M678-679); cf *Super Matthaeum* 26.4 (M2200-2203); ST III.78.3 ad 3.

witnesses; but there is also a specific sense which has these two properties: the disposition of an inheritance to be received; and that this inheritance is not confirmed except through death (Heb 9:17).

Inheritance is linked to sonship, for it is precisely by being promised an inheritance that we are adopted as sons of God.[95] Thomas, talking of adoption, holds that *hereditas* is a very suitable term for describing the way we receive beatitude, for the *hereditas* someone bestows is that out of which that person is rich, and we, as rational creatures, made in God's image, are able to enjoy God through knowledge and love, as God does.[96] Although adoption, being a work *ad extra*, is a work of the whole Trinity, as our adopted filiation is a likeness of the natural filiation of the eternal Son, it is appropriate that it is achieved through the incarnate Son as exemplar, the eldest of many brothers.[97] In the commentary on Romans, Thomas sees adoption as conformity to the image of his Son, firstly in the right of sharing the inheritance, and secondly in the participation of his splendour.[98] We have already seen that the ability to conform us to his image is part of the way that Christ's grace is the source of our grace.

Any *alliance*, says Mauss, is made in the face of death, but Thomas holds that death is, to use Maussian terms, the symbol that mediates and makes effective a *testamentum*, and the new *testamentum* is mediated, or confirmed, by the death of Christ. In his commentary on Hebrews Thomas explains this confirmation by noting that the death of the testator is necessary in two ways. Firstly, because death makes it "expressive of the last will" which can no longer be changed. Secondly, because

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95 *Super Romanos* 8.6 (M704)
96 ST III.23.1 cor.
97 ST III.23.2 cor and ad 3.
98 *Super Romanos* 8.6 (M704).

through death a *testamentum* "is valid and has efficacy" - no one is able to seek anything left to them in a will until the testator is dead.[99] Yet in the *Summa* Thomas notes that because the goods at stake are spiritual goods they can be possessed by many at the same time, and so there is no detriment to the Father if we receive our inheritance while he is still living.[100] We are left to draw the conclusion that if God chooses to enact the *testamentum* through a death, this is because the symbolism of death speaks to us, rather than from any necessity on God's part.

Thus God chooses the death of his incarnate Son as the most *conveniens* way of enacting the *testamentum* by which we are promised an inheritance of eternal beatitude as adopted sons in the likeness of the natural Son. This argument seems in no way to depend upon payment of price, removal of punishments, satisfaction, redemption, or merit.

7.2.2.2 Blood as a sign of death

Perhaps we have skipped a step here. For any covenant or testament to be effective, something must be handed from one party to the other in a public way. If death makes the *testamentum* effective, this is only so because it is symbolized (both represented and turned into a covenant-making symbol) by blood. This idea is fundamental to Thomas, for in a mere 24 lines of his commentary on 1 Corinthians he says three times that the new *testamentum* is mediated or confirmed (*confirmatum*) by the death of Christ which is symbolized by his blood. It is the *exhibitio* of this blood that effects the *testamentum*.[101]

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[99] *Super Hebraeos* 9.4 (M451). Here Thomas uses *confirmare* just for the first sort of necessity, but given the way Thomas uses words, it is not unreasonable to take his use of *confirmare* elsewhere in this regard to cover both sorts of necessity. Like the Corinthians commentary, this text also refers to the use of blood in the establishing of the covenant under Moses (M453-455).

[100] ST III.23.1 ad 3.

[101] *Super I Corinthios* 11.6 (M678-679).

It is on this basis that Thomas tackles two of the seeming oppositions in the formula, between newness and eternity, and between the fundamental interiority of the New Testament, and exteriority of the gesture that enacts it. He begins with the basic meaning of *testamentum*, namely, the disposition of an inheritance. God's disposition (which we perhaps could connect with his *ordo iustitiae*) is that the heavenly inheritance is to be given to people "through the power of the blood of Jesus Christ," because death is necessary to give effect to a *testamentum*, and the blood here, presumably, is the sign of the death.[102] Certainly the blood needs not merely to be shed, but also produced in public (*exhibitus*), as befits a *testamentum* as a public reality. Indeed, the *exhibitio* of the blood is such an essential part of the *testamentum* that the new *exhibitio*, done not *in figura* but *in rei veritate*, is what constitutes the difference between the two *testamenta*: even if the *testamentum* is eternal according to God's preordination, it is new by reason of the *exhibitio* of the blood.[103] Interestingly, he does not use the figure/truth distinction to explain how the new *testamentum* is about internal inspiration (the context in which he introduced it) rather than external rewards and punishments; he does that merely by saying that the internal inspiration comes from the blood, even if it is an external reality, because we are justified by the passion. That leads to the role of faith, but we shall come to that shortly. But first we shall consider one more example of the power of this blood.

7.2.2.3 Entering the underworld in the power of the blood

The need for a public enactment is always there, even in the descent into Hades. The patriarchs have personally merited the beatific vision, but the "gates of

[102] ST III.78.3 ad 3.
[103] ST III.78.3 ad 3 and ad 4.

heaven" are closed to them because of the *reatus* of the whole human race, and are not opened until this is paid by the "price of Christ's blood."[104] But once again this must be somehow applied to them, not by sacraments (as the patriarchs' souls are no longer in their bodies), but by Christ's descent - in his soul - to the underworld.[105] Thomas favourite scriptural text to support this is Zechariah 9:11: "he drew out those who had been bound in the pit by the blood of his *testamentum.*"[106] So God's disposition still holds: in order to preserve the order of justice, no-one is given the heavenly inheritance except through the blood of Christ. And, as we have seen earlier, the order of justice is a public thing: it is for the sake of this order and its effect on the whole human race that the patriarchs are "punished" by being shut out of paradise until the shedding of the blood that symbolizes the death of the Son - it is not surprising, therefore, that it is made publicly, for even the damned are aware of it, as we shall see.

The more we focus on beatitude as adopted sonship enabled by a *testamentum*, the more we see the appropriateness of the closure of the gates of heaven until the *testamentum* has been enacted in the Son's death. This also is a fitting way to deal with original sin, which is a punishment to bring into order the disorder caused by bad fatherhood - and Thomas is clear that this is not the malice associated with any particular act of begetting, but the whole *habitus* of concupiscence that affects the process of reproduction.[107] This can explain it all

[104] ST III.49.5 ad 1.

[105] We could make a further distinction, that *exhibitio* refers to the giving, *applicatio* to the receiving, so that in the same act of *exhibitio* various people will receive differently, and the *applicatio* will not be the same. ST III.52.8 ad 2.

[106] According to the *Index Thomisticus*, it is cited 17 times for this purpose.

[107] ST I-II.81.5, *De Malo* 4.2 ad 7. Of course, as M. Leblanc comments, original sin is known through not through reason but revelation. "Aspects du péché originel dans la pensée de saint Thomas d'Aquin," *Revue Thomiste* 93.4 (1993): 569-570, 573, cf ST I-II.81.1 cor. The revelation, moreover, is strictly a revelation of its overcoming: in finding our true father, we realise that fatherhood as given to us by Adam is defective. However, it is more likely that it was through his theology of the virginal conception of Jesus that Thomas came to insist on the role of the father in

without the need to mention "price," and as we shall see shortly, Thomas himself admits that the paying of a price is a manner of speaking about something which already has salvific value in its own right.

Of course, Christ descends into Hades not in his body but in his soul, and so he does not take the blood with him, but enters through the power of the blood. Thomas cites Hebrews 9:11: "Christ . . . through his own blood entered once into the holy place."[108] What Christ brings is the fruit of his passion, "suae passionis fructum exhibuit sanctis in inferno detentis."[109] What mode of *exhibitio* takes place between the soul of Christ and the souls and demons in the underworld is not explained, although the metaphor of light is used in several places.[110] Whatever the mode by which it takes place, Christ's visit has an effect through the whole of the underworld, bringing salvation to some and confutation and confusion to others.[111]

7.2.3 The mystery of faith

The souls of the just in the underworld see Christ directly (with the vision of the soul), and go straight into heaven: they need neither faith to give them knowledge nor hope to establish a likeness with God. This is not the case for us still *in via* who walk by faith.

There are two objections to the inclusion of the words *mysterium fidei* in the formula of consecration.[112] The first, focusing on *mysterium*, is that these words have suggested to some that Christ's body and blood are present only "mystice" (which

handing on original sin. ST I.119.2 ad 4, III.31.4 ad 3, III.32.4 cor.

[108] ST III.49.5 cor.

[109] ST III.52.5 ad 3.

[110] ST III.52.2 cor, ad 1; III.52.4 ad 1. However, the "light of glory" is only given to the fully purged; those in purgatory benefit from Christ's descent, but do not at this stage receive this light, merely hope, ST III.52.2 cor.

[111] ST III. 52.2 cor, III.52.6 ad 1.

[112] ST III.78.3 obj 5 and 6.

could mean only allegorically) in this sacrament. The second, focusing on *fidei*, is that baptism is the sacrament of faith, the Eucharist the sacrament of charity. In both cases Thomas gives a twofold response to the objection.

Mysterium does not exclude the "truth of the thing", but shows its hiddenness: the blood of Christ is hidden in this sacrament, Christ was hidden under the figures of the old *testamentum*. It is the mystery "of faith," not as a protestation of faith, but as being the object of faith: faith that the blood is truly there, and faith through which the passion of Christ justifies us.[113] The responses are linked because the hiddenness of the blood is the reason it can only be known to be truly there by faith. (The question remains whether they are also linked through the second example: is the faith that justifies the same as the faith that sees Christ as the fulfilment of the figures of the old *testamentum*?) We should note that this sacrament, which is the mystery of faith, symbolizes and causes charity ("caritatis quasi figurativum et effectivum"). Of course, the journey from faith to charity goes by way of hope, hope of sharing God's beatitude.

In the Eucharist, as we have seen, by faith we first know that what is offered to us is truly the blood of Christ, which is of exceeding price and infinite dignity, by virtue of its union to the person of the Word. It is also blood offered to establish a covenant, and so it promises a new and extraordinary level of likeness; Thomas takes the word "eternal" in the formula to refer to our eternal heritage, which we can understand to be the beatific vision.[114]

[113] ST III.78.3 ad 5 and ad 6.
[114] ST III.78.3 ad 4.

7.2.4 The pledge of future glory

Now, the gift object (*effectus*) is not as important as the spirit of the gift (*affectus*). Therefore, the ultimate effect of the Eucharist, union to God in Christ, is something greater than the precious blood itself. Just as baptismal character has its value in that it enables us to enjoy the Eucharist, so also the Eucharist itself, no matter what great delight it gives us, is not our final goal. Interestingly, Thomas poses this as a paradox working in the other direction: how can something lesser (to take Christ's body and blood under another *species*) produce something greater (to enjoy (*frui*) him in his proper *species* as we shall do in glory), for nothing acts beyond its own *species*? He then resolves it by reminding us that it is of the nature of sacraments to use instrumental causes, which produce an effect beyond the power that resides within them.[115] This instrumentality applies not just to the bread and wine (*sacramentum tantum*), but also to the body and blood of Christ (*res et sacramentum*). To put it another way, granted that a covenant is made in the blood of Christ, it can only be a covenant which enables nothing less than a sharing of the Holy Spirit.

So it is faith that enables us to recognise the reality of the blood of Christ, which inspires hope in the new *testamentum*, hope of much greater likeness to Christ, and on the strength of that likeness-of-great-price, charity arises. And charity is precisely the working of the Holy Spirit, the spirit in which the gift is given, which flows through it.

So, is the blood itself the pledge of future glory? In one way we could say yes: the blood is the gift which establishes the new and eternal *testamentum*, which

[115] ST III.79.2 obj 3 and ad 3.

ultimately promises the beatific vision. And that would be true if we take *pignus* in its narrow sense, for strictly speaking a *pignus* is of a different nature to what is promised, and is returned when the promise is fulfilled. If something is given that is of the same kind as what is ultimately expected, but lesser in quantity, then the strict term, says Thomas, is *arra* (a sort of down payment)[116] But Thomas, following the usage of scripture, applies both terms only to the Holy Spirit: *arra* strictly speaking and *pignus* in a looser sense, because as well manifesting itself through charity which endures and is perfected, the Holy Spirit also gives lesser gifts (faith and hope) which do not endure.[117]

One final remark on the pledge. What is pledged is not there - and, as we shall soon see, the same applies to what is remembered. The future glory is not present, but only signified, because, as Thomas says, it is the final cause of our sanctification. The final cause is not the motive of God's action, for nothing is caused in God; nor does God know through signs. Rather, the pledge is given to *us*, and acts as a final cause for *us*. Thus we are not to be viewed as objects to be sanctified, but are active agents of our sanctification with a view to eternal glory; we are acting in hope. This is not to say that God is not acting, but rather that God is acting by giving himself (the active Spirit) in the modality of a final cause, as well as a formal cause and an efficient cause. The efficient cause is the passion, and we would expect it also to act upon us by making us agents, not to motivate us with an end in view (for that would make it a final cause). It is to this cause that we must now turn.

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116 *Super Ephesianos 1.5* (M43)

117 A slightly different interpretation of *pignus* is given at *Super II Corinthios* 5.2 (M161).

7.3 The memory of his passion is renewed: the Eucharist and charity

We have established that in the Eucharist we are given a ground of charity through knowledge, for we are led beyond this world to the world above, so that we know that there is something worth seeking. We have also been given a ground through hope, because the beatific vision is promised to us as our inheritance. We also need to be prompted into charity through goodness, and this in two ways; through an act of undeserved love that excites our love in response, and through a removal of sin and the punishment due to sin, because as sinners we could come to believe that our present state of bondage is where God wants us to be, or fail to love ourselves. This double motivation is particularly evident in the ten reasons Thomas gives for the incarnation.[118] And so we need to consider the way that the passion is present in the Eucharist, particularly as a motive for love.

7.3.1 Memory, or making the efficient cause effective

Like our future glory, the passion is not truly present in the Eucharist. Thomas talks of a presence of *Christus passus*, not *Christus patiens*.[119] The Eucharist is a sacrifice because it commemorates Christ's passion.[120] The passion is present as a memory, and there is nothing in Thomas to suggest the sort of memory that Odo Casel talks about, the *mysteriengegenwart*, the remembering that makes the past act present again.[121] Let us look at how Thomas understands memory.

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[118] ST III.1.2 cor.

[119] *Scriptum*, 4.8.1.2. cor and ad 6, 4.8.1.2.2 cor; ST III.49.4 cor (possibly), III.66.9 ad 5, III.73.3 ad 3, 73.5 ad 2, 73.6 cor, 75.1 cor; *Super Ioannem* 6.6 (M963), 21.2 (M2599). In baptism there is a configuration to the death of Christ, and in penance configuration and conformation to *Christus patiens*, *Scriptum* 3.19.1 .3.2 cor, ST III.49.3 ad 2. The contrast between baptism and Eucharist is clearly made in ST III.66.9 ad 5.

[120] ST III.73.4 cor and ad 3, 79.7 cor and ad 2, cf ST III.83.1 cor, ad 2.

[121] Cf 6.4.

7.3.1.1 Memory and gratitude

Seneca recommends the would-be benefactor that he should give something that will last and that the beneficiary will see often, to be reminded of the benefactor's favour and to increase the prospect of an act of gratitude without needing to ask for one directly.[122] Taking his cue from Seneca, Thomas connects memory and gratitude, taking the third and most serious stage of ingratitude to be a complete lack of awareness of the benefit, as a result of, among other things, forgetfulness.[123] Thomas is referring not to forgetfulness that happens involuntarily from a natural weakness, but to that which arises from negligence, culpable because true gratitude (which, as we recall, is the natural response to a benefit) constantly remembers the benefit and seeks to repay: as Seneca cited by Thomas says: "It is clear that forgetfulness creeps up on the one who has not often thought about repaying."[124] To refresh the memory of the passion, therefore, is the virtuous act of one who is *gratus*, and in this case it is already a work of *gratia* performed in the power of the Holy Spirit - unless of course it is a dead work that brings no benefit, but obviously Thomas is not talking about that here. Just as with grace and pledge, when the Magnificat antiphon talks of memory, it is referring to the work of the Holy Spirit.

The purpose in remembering the passion is to excite gratitude/grace. Thomas reminds us that it is the spirit of the gift that is more important than the gift object. In the Eucharist the gift object is present - the body and blood of Christ -

[122] "Ipsa res evanescentem memoriam excitet." Seneca *De Beneficiis* 1.12.1.
[123] ST II-II.106.2 obj 3 and cor, with reference to Seneca *De Beneficiis* 3.1.
[124] ST II-II.106.1 ad 2, citing Seneca *De Beneficiis* 3.2.1. Seneca's describes how a desire for new things leads to a forgetfulness of past *beneficia* and is thus incompatible with thanksgiving, noting that once they are obtained things tend to be considered "cheap (*vile*)" and "negligible (*leve*)," and even the one who bestows them (*auctor*) is not "in pretio." *De Beneficiis* 3.3. Similarly, when Thomas describes how material desires are never satisfied, he notes that before it is obtained the temporal thing "is reckoned to be of great price (*magni pretii*);" *Super Ioannem* 4. 2 (M586)).

but in order for us to receive it graciously, we must understand the spirit in which it is given. As we are not mind-readers, we cannot know this directly, but can read it, so to speak, from the signs, especially those that are part of the manner of giving.[125] We thus remember the passion so that we can see in it the signs of the spirit in which the gift was given.

7.3.1.2 What we should remember from the passion

So far we have considered the "spirit of the gift" in fairly general terms: love, freedom, or the utterly undefinable Holy Spirit. We can also adopt a more focussed approach, considering: the specific virtues with which the gift is given; the personal cost to the giver; and the extent to which the recipient deserves the gift at the time of the giving.

The first one is fairly straightforward. Christ's passion, says Thomas, provides an example of all the virtues, and so encourages us to imitate them.[126] The passion is not just one example to imitate among many, but, because it is the occasion of this great gift to us, it impinges upon as exactly when we are most moved to imitate.[127] This aspect of memory affects the way we love in return rather than the extent of that love.

Secondly, Thomas, following Seneca, notes that we should consider the personal cost to the giver.[128] Christ's suffering and death, then, work with great effectiveness in this sacrament not because they are part of the gift object (either to God or to us), but because they indicate the spirit of the gift. Here Thomas

[125] ST II-II.106.5 ad 3.
[126] ST III.46.3 cor, cf 46.4 cor.
[127] ST III.73.5 cor,
[128] ST II-II.106.3 ad 5; 106.5 sed contra and ad 1, citing Seneca *De Beneficiis* 1.7.1 and 1.6.1.

emphasises that Christ's suffering was greater than any other human suffering.[129] And as the spirit of the gift so profoundly affects the gift response, Christ's extreme suffering enables a response from us in the face of any suffering that might confront us.[130]

But Christ inspires suffering in us in another way. As the sufferings not of an unconnected other, but of one who is giving to us (and in fact entering into covenant with us through that gift), they are the sufferings of one who is already a friend. And when a friend suffers, especially when a friend suffers for us, then we ourselves suffer.[131] Thomas notes that to receive cheerfully is already to give thanks;[132] we can add that to suffer with one who suffers in giving is an integral part of gracious reception, a gracious reception enabled by the grace of the giver.

Thirdly, we must consider that Christ died for us while still sinners. This adds enormously to the gratuity of the gift. And when we consider that our sins are the cause of the suffering, then the suffering we feel as we see Christ suffer increases.

7.3.1.3 Satisfaction as a way of considering the establishment of the covenant

And we are now in a position to consider satisfaction again. As we recall, satisfaction is that hybrid action - in some respect voluntary, in some respect involuntary - that disrupts a cycle of exchange or an economy that is based on punishment, and replaces it with one that is based on gift. The gift must be great enough to overwhelm all the demand for punishment, voluntary enough to start a

[129] ST III.46.6.
[130] ST III.46.4 cor.
[131] *Summa Contra Gentiles* 3.158.7.
[132] ST II-II.106.3 ad 5, citing Seneca, *De Beneficiis* 2.22.

cycle of gift exchange, and yet involuntary enough to replace the punishment. For an offence is that which should not have been and which disrupts the order; it can be healed only by acknowledging that disruption of the order, through an action that itself would not have been if the original offence had not taken place - and this sense (that it otherwise would not have been) is conveyed by its involuntary aspect.[133] Hence the sufferings of Christ are presented to us as things that he naturally resiled from, but which he accepted only in accordance with his Father's will, the will to reconcile humanity in the face of sin, and the gift that he gives, his precious blood, is of infinite value, and starts a new economy of the gift.[134] Obviously, to present Christ's suffering as satsifactory unites two things that affect the extent of our reponse in love: the cost to the giver and our unworthiness as sinners (and hence the love of the giver). A similar advantage holds when we present Christ's death as redemptive or sacrificial.

7.3.2 How can one person satisfy for another?

7.3.2.1 Congruous satisfaction and the extended subject

The problem arises when we try to reconcile all this with the mediaeval notion that the one who has offended must pay satisfaction: one person cannot satisfy for another one. Thomas resolves this problem in two ways.

The first is that, as pointed out earlier, when Christ suffers, we suffer with him, so that his suffering are also in some sense our sufferings.[135] This goes some of the way, but our sufferings never reach the magnitude or the merit of his; they might satisfy congruously, but a congruous satisfaction can only work if it is based upon a

[133] ST I-II.87.6 cor.
[134] ST III.47.2 ad 2; cf ST III.18.5.
[135] *Summa Contra Gentiles* 5.158.7.

condign satisfaction, and the condign satisfaction is that of Christ, so we are back where we started.[136] (We might add that, if it is really our suffering that has achieved the result, there is less motivation to be thankful to Christ for his sufferings.)

The other way is to argue that we are all one body, and therefore Christ's sufferings (or the merits of the sufferings) belong to us, which Thomas does in several places.[137] But, as we have seen, the body is only a metaphor. We are *quasi una mystica persona*, but we are not one real person. But we have also seen - in the case of merit - that body metaphor works in a different way. Christ performs meritorious actions that have an effect in us as though they were our meritorious actions, and so we have an extended sense of merit, producing an extended subject: neither makes sense on its own, but taken together there is a real analogy of proportionality to merit normally considered; moreover, the very the way that Christ's actions affect us provides the means of becoming part of the extended subject. Does Thomas deal with satisfaction in the same way?

7.3.2.2 The apparent duplication in the questions on the effects of the passion

We should expect the same logic to be operating, for there is the one saving action of Christ, effective on account of his divinity, operating by the mode of merit when we consider his soul, and by the modes of satisfaction, redemption and sacrifice when we consider his body.[138] And indeed this logic is behind the division into two questions of the treatment of the effects of the passion divided: the first about the *modus efficiendi*, the second about the effects, as we can see.

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136 ST III.1.2 ad 2.
137 *Scriptum* 3.19.1.1.1 ad 4, ST III.48.2 ad 1, III.49.1 cor, 49.3 ad 3.
138 ST III.48.6 ad 3.

III.48		III.49	
1.	merit	6.	Christ merits his own exaltation
2.	satisfaction	3.	liberation from punishment for sin
		5.	opening the gates of heaven
3.	sacrifice	4.	reconciliation with God
4 & 5.	redemption	1.	liberation from slavery to sin. . .
		2.	. . . and to the Devil
6.	efficiency (includes all other modes)		

This is not otiose repetition. In question 48 we have the extension of the action: Thomas is showing how the passion, as an action of Christ undertaken for us, can truthfully be spoken of in the traditional language of merit, satisfaction, sacrifice and redemption, with a final article looking at efficiency that also neatly summarises the distinctions between the terms. In question 49 he shows the effects the passion has on us, and thus, implicitly, an extension of the subject.

7.3.2.3 The modes in which the passion operates

The first article addresses merit, and having refered us back to earlier discussions about Christ's capital grace and merit, it then argues that the *passion* is worthy of meriting salvation.[139] The responses to the objections then argue that the merit (in God's eyes) comes from charity, which was the same as in all Christ's actions, but the external aspects, which removed the impediments to our reception of the rewards of this merit, made the passion the most appropriate action of Christ to merit our salvation.[140] The last article makes clear that merit takes place through the soul of Christ, and the other modes (satisfaction, sacrifice and redemption) through the body, for Christ took on a body precisely to remove the impediments we impose by being turned to bodily things.[141] Thus what pleases God, charity, is in the highest

[139] ST III.48.1 cor.
[140] ST III.48.1 ad 1, 2 and 3, cf *Quodlibet* 2.1.2.
[141] ST III.48.6 ad 3, cf. III.1.3 ad 1.

part of the soul which did not suffer; and the suffering, greater than any other human suffering, did not please God but was for the sake of its effect upon us.[142]

Thomas then looks at these other modes, and first satisfaction. The body of the article shows that the passion offered something greater than the offence committed; to the objection that only the one who has committed the fault can satisfy, Thomas promises that he will explain (presumably in the next question) how when two become one in charity, one can satisfy for another, but as a hint he points out that, unlike confession and contrition which can only be done by the person concerned, for satisfaction one can use an "instrument," which, as Aristotle points out, might be a friend.[143]

Then Thomas defines sacrifice as "something done for the sake of giving God the honour owed to him to bring peace with him (*ad eum placandum*)", and as Christ honoured God with an act of great love, this was a sacrifice.[144]

Similarly, redemption is defined as setting people free from slavery by paying a price, so Thomas shows that human beings were under a twofold slavery from which they were set free by Christ's satisfying passion: if this passion is considered as some sort of price (*quasi quoddam pretium*), then they can be spoken of as redeemed.[145]

Before we began this question we already knew that Christ could merit for us. Now we know that Christ's passion is the appropriate action by which to do so, for in its bodily aspects it overcomes the impediments, provided that we can justify

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[142] ST III.46.5-8. Or, as Torrell puts it, it was the passion and not any other meritorious act because of our weakness. *Le Christ en ses mystères*. 2:390.

[143] ST III.48.2 cor, ad 1.

[144] ST III.48.3 cor. Torrell translates this tricky phrase as "pour assurer sa bienveillance." *Le Christ en ses mystères*, 2:409.

[145] ST III.48.4 cor. Hence my remarks at 7.2.2.2 that we can explain our salvation without reference to "price," but mention of "price" is usefully added afterwards.

not only sharing in Christ's merit, but also in his satisfaction. To show this is the task of question 49.

7.3.2.4. How the passion makes us one body with Christ

While the question works as a whole, I shall focus on the third article, how the passion frees us from liability to punishment, and draw upon the other articles as necessary. The corpus of this article gives nothing new: Christ has freed us both directly, by paying our satisfaction (in a manner yet to be fully explained), and indirectly, in that the passion causes forgiveness of sins (presumably by provoking charity, as in the first article), and sin is the source of punishment.[146]

7.3.2.4.1 Clothing ourselves in the passion of Christ

The first response points out that Christ's passion must be applied to us through faith, charity and the sacraments of the faith (and thus it has no effects on the souls in Hell).[147] The idea of application carries through into the remaining two responses, but using the terminology of configuration and conformity.[148] We are configured to the passion, death and burial of Christ seen as *poena* (naturally enough, as satisfaction is about liability to *poena*), but we are conformed to Christ in grace and glory.

Thomas does not employ clothing imagery here, but I shall use it as a preliminary to a more rigorous explanation. Let us recall that clothing adopts the *figura* of the one who wears it. [149] The humanity that Christ takes on is humanity

[146] ST III.49.3 cor.
[147] ST III.49.3 ad 1.
[148] See the discussion at 6.3.4.
[149] See 6.3.3.

liable to the *poena* of death and bodily suffering, not because he himself is liable to punishment, but because this is our humanity, and he is taking it on for our salvation;[150] in doing so it is changed as it adapts to his figure, that is, the outward manifestation of his inner reality - for it is through the clothes that a person is seen. When we look at Christ in faith, believing him to be innocent, the sufferings are re-configured, for they cannot be punishment for his sins. Hence Thomas retains the idea that in engineering the death of Christ, the Devil overreached himself and exposed his injustice.[151] This is part of the shift from the Old Law to the New Law, for, as Thomas makes quite clear, under the Old Law temporal goods and ills were seen as rewards and punishments in themselves, but under the New it is eternal life that is seen as the only real reward (and its loss as the only real punishment), and all temporal goods and ills can only be evaluated in the light of the eternal.[152] Before we have been configured to Christ we are under the Old Law, and see the pains of this life as punishment. When we put on Christ, our humanity is configured to his, and in particular our sufferings are configured to his sufferings or covered by them;[153] when we look at our sufferings, we see his, and therefore we do not see punishment, but something that helps us on the road to glory, signs of God's love for us. If anything, the sufferings are medicinal, as were Christ's (although in his case, as he needed no healing, they are medicinal for others).[154]

With this in mind, we can now look at those last two responses in the article under discussion.

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[150] ST III.14.1 cor, ad 3; 14.2 cor, 14.3 cor, ad 2.

[151] ST III.49.2 cor. This "fishhook" theory is also found at *Super Romanos* 8.1 (M609), *Super Hebraeos* 2.4 (M142) and, complete with fishhook, at *Super Iob*, 40.

[152] ST I-II.114.10.

[153] Besides this article, see ST III.52.1 ad 2, 66.2 cor, 66.11 cor, 80.10 ad 1.

[154] ST I-II.114.10 cor, ad 3 and ad 4. Thomas compares Christ's sufferings to a medicine for us at ST III.49.1 ad 3, and other places, III.31.7 ad 3, 46.10 obj 3, 69.1 ad 3.

7.3.2.4.2 Configuration to the passion

The *ad secundum* does not mention conformity, only configuration. The objection is that, if Christ has satisfied for us, satisfaction should not be imposed as part of the sacrament of penance. Thomas replies that in order to gain the effect of Christ's passion, we need to be configured to it.[155] (There is a step missing here. The easiest way to fill the gap is to say that as every effect resembles its cause, if we bear the effect of the passion, we must somehow resemble it. The passion is a bodily thing which will affect us in our bodies - the reason for the incarnation was that Christ's body could have an effect on our bodies - hence we are concerned with the outward manifestation or *figura*.) Thomas then points out that we are configured to Christ's passion sacramentally, and in baptism that configuration is to his death (cf Rom 6:4), and so no further satisfaction is necessary for the purposes of configuration to gain its effect. But, as Christ died only once, we can only be configured to his death through baptism once. Thus after baptism the configuration to the suffering Christ is through "aliquid poenalitatis vel passionis" which penitents take on themselves. This suffices "through the co-operation of the satisfaction of Christ." This response is about what is appropriate at the level of *figura*.

7.3.2.4.3 Conformity to the passion

The third objection was that, as death is the punishment for sin, if we still die then Christ has not satisfied for us. Thomas begins his response by saying that "the satisfaction of Christ has an effect in us insofar as we are incorporated to him as members to the head, as was said above."[156] He is talking here of formal causality,

[155] ST III.49.3 ad 2.
[156] ST III.49.3 ad 3.

whereas the last article was talking of efficient instrumental causality. Moreover, Thomas is clear that the head-members relationship is about the flow of grace. In fact, he could have just mentioned grace, but he has explained that we can talk of "satisfaction" because of the head-member relationship, and so he takes that as his starting point. But now when he says "but members need to be in conformity with the head," he makes it clear that this is likeness at an inner level. Then he goes on to explain the likeness, with the parallel "just as Christ" "so also we." The likeness is about grace and glory: "Just as Christ first had grace in his soul with passibility of the body, and through the passion arrived at the glory of immortality." The parallel follows - "So also we, who are his members" - and then he deals with the two consequences of "membership." First of all, satisfaction: we "are indeed set free through the passion from liability to any punishment whatsoever." Then conformity: "but in such a way that first in our soul we receive the spirit of adoption as sons, by which we are numbered among those entitled to the inheritance of the glory of immortality, while still having a passible and mortal body; but afterwards, having been configured to the sufferings and death of Christ, we are led into eternal glory," which he supports by citing Romans 8:17.

The role inheritance plays in the argument enables us to examine the reciprocal relation between covenant and satisfaction. The blood, as instituting the covenant, manifests publicly that we are entitled to eternal glory. The gift is of such value (in terms of both gift object and the spirit of the gift) that the covenant promise of union with God is believable. Moreover, for Thomas, only spiritual punishments are real punishement, so for those destined for eternal glory, there is no punishment (except the self-inflicted loss of glory). Thus the blood of Christ has removed all

punishment. Further, this process of removing all punishment can be considered as satisfaction because it is achieved by offering something to God whose value outweighs the offence caused by all our sins, and thus the gravity of sin and the order of justice are not upset in this process. Remember that, even in human terms, satisfaction is about restoring the status of the offended one in the eyes of others. Thomas, by taking satisfaction as something Christ does in his body, makes it something that removes an impediment in us rather than something to which God responds (as he does to Christ's meritorious charity). Finally, it can be counted as satisfaction because, filled with grace from Christ as our head, we are one body with him, we love him, and we see his sufferings as our own, even suffering with him.

7.3.2.4.4 Becoming one body in Christ

Hence Thomas' insistence that God can forgive without satisfaction, but in his mercy satisfies for the sins he forgives;[157] for indeed he does not require satisfaction in order to forgive, but forgives in a way that enables us to look at the process of forgiveness as satisfaction, so as to impress upon us the extent of his love and the seriousness of sin. It would seem to be in order to emphasise the seriousness of sin that the holy souls are not admitted into heaven until Christ descends to the underworld.[158] And in the same way it is the passion, as conferring forgiveness, that constructs the satisfying subject in which we are included.

Once this extended subject, this *persona mystica*, has been established, we can use it to talk of Christ's offering as the "price" that frees us from sin and so redeems us; or as the sacrifice that restores us to friendship, realising always that the

[157] ST III.46.2 ad 3, cf III.46.1 ad 3.
[158] ST III.49.5 cor, ad 1. Cf 7.2.3.

obstacles to friendship were on our side, and that "placated" needs to be read in that light.[159]

As a final reminder that we are dealing with an "extended subject," the last article looks at Christ meriting exaltation for himself in his passion, which, we recall, was what Christ merits in the strict sense of the word, and yet for our benefit.[160] Christ's resurrection is the cause of our resurrection.[161] Christ merits ascension, through which "in a way (*quasi*) he led us into possession of the heavenly kingdom."[162] Thirdly, Christ merits to sit at God's right hand and have his divinity manifested so that he can be revered as God by all;[163] but we are inseparable from him in his glory, and indeed we manifest it, like the shining robe that surrounds him at his transfiguration, through which his glorious humanity is seen. Finally, Christ merits power of judgement, and this power not only brings justice (presumably to the benefit of the just), but his judgement is also the occasion of the overcoming of death. Thus Christ's passion is the cause of our salvation through the mode of merit.

Thus question 49, taken as a whole, shows how the passion brings us salvation, provided that it is applied to us through faith and the sacraments of the faith, for it is through these means that we become one with Christ.

7.3.2.5 Bearing the passion of Christ in our bodies

Two corollaries of this should be considered here.

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[159] We should keep in mind that words related to buying and selling originally referred to the redemption of captives, and were only later transferred to commercial trade in objects. Benveniste, *Indo-European Language and Society*, 105-112.

[160] ST III.49.6. There is both a reference back to III.19.3-4 and, as Torrell notes, an *inclusio* with III.48.1, emphasised by using the same *sed contra*. *Le Christ en ses mystères*, 2:446.

[161] ST III.56.1. In the prologue to *Tertia Pars*, Thomas notes that it will be divided into three parts, the third of which will be "about the end of eternal life, which we reach through him by rising." Thus, if the *Summa* had been finished, this issue would have been explored in much greater depth.

[162] ST III.49.5 ad 4, cf III.57.6.

[163] ST III.49.6 cor, cf III.58.2-4.

The first concerns the passibility of our bodies that remains until the judgement. Thomas has pointed out that merit, which has its root in the soul, is more fundamental as a mode of causing salvation than satisfaction, redemption and sacrifice, which are based in bodily actions. And yet it is through the passible and mortal body that Christ performs the actions that merit our salvation. The first in any genus is the cause of all the others, and so Christ's journey from grace to glory is the cause of ours, and so our journey (the effect) will resemble his. If Christ's passion had removed all the *poenalitates*, we could still have performed meritorious actions - and indeed ones caused by Christ's passion - but they would have only been pale reflections of his original meritorious actions, and we would have been deprived of the opportunity to show the gratitude that we wanted to show him by reflecting his glory as fully as possible.[164] Such an answer, of course, can only be understood by one who is motivated by the truest gratitude, who is "full of grace," such as was the motivation of countless martyrs.

Secondly, we can now return to an unanswered question: if the pledge of future glory responds to the anagogical reading, and the filling of the mind with grace to the tropological reading, why does the memory of the passion respond to the allegorical reading? We have seen that one of the key ways the passion works is that it enables us see that our true reward is eternal life, and that any good or evil we receive in this world can be evaluated as reward or punishment only in this light. Thomas uses this insight to argue that although any material reward or punishment spoken of in the Old Testament was an actual historical event, it can only be truly understood as reward or punishment when taken as an allegory of eternal rewards and punishments. If we fail to grasp this allegorical reading, we shall neither escape

[164] Cf ST III.69.3 cor.

from a logic and ethic of carnal rewards and punishments, nor will we realise that our temporal woes are not punishments from God - in fact, we shall still think that God is punishing us either directly or through the Devil, and so we shall fail to appreciate that we are children of the covenant. The memory of the passion thus enables the allegorical reading which is indispensable for our salvation.

7.3.2.6 The dependence of baptism on the Eucharist

Thus the relation between baptism and the Eucharist is seen more clearly. Baptism provides the *habitus* of grace and virtues, and the Eucharist, involving a recollection of this *gratia*, elicits an act from the *habitus* an act of *gratia*, or perhaps one could say *actio gratiarum* (thanksgiving).[165] Thomas thus holds - against the custom among the Greeks - that there is no point in giving the Eucharist to those who cannot understand it, such as infants.[166]

Thus this approach gives us a way of thinking of baptismal character as a passive sharing in Christ's priesthood, for without the configuration of our body to the body of Christ, a fruitful reception of the Eucharist is not possible. We also see how being joined to his mystical body *corporaliter* can enable the reception of grace, and thus spiritual membership of the mystical body.

But, if the Eucharist depends upon baptism, so also baptism depends on the Eucharist. Thomas declares that baptism only has an effect because it contains a *votum* for the Eucharist, albeit sometimes only an implicit one (particularly for infants, where the *votum* is the *votum* of the Church, just as they are baptized into the faith of the Church), something that will be explained at greater length in chapter

[165] ST III.69.6 cor, III.79.1 ad 2, 79.8 ad 2.
[166] ST III.80.9 cor and ad 3; *Super Ioannem* 6.7 (M969).

eight.[167] And this makes sense: the *habitus* exists for the sake of the act; the figurative reception of Christ for the sake of the real reception.

We could put it in Maussian terms: sacraments are offered to us as part of a sacramental system, a system of signs that are meaningful as a system. Baptism enables the entry into that system, it is the gift that institutes the *alliance*; the Eucharist, recalling the *alliance* as instituted, is the sacrament wherein the exchanges that express and strengthen that *alliance* take place.

7.3.3 The signification of the sacramental system as a whole

There are two other points to be made about the signification of the sacramental system as a whole.

The gift, as gift, does not need to be given. In particular, what makes an object into a gift object is ultimately not anything in the object itself, but the will of the giver who, precisely as giver, is not compelled to act.[168] In this sense the choice of the gift object is arbitrary, in a similar way as the choice of the linguistic signifier. This, of course, applies especially for gifts that institute *alliance*; once an *alliance* has been established there is a shared world of meaning that renders some objects suitable, expected or even obligatory for certain purposes. Thomas notes that there were sacrifices and sacraments even before the giving of the Old Law, and these were chosen in congruity with the time, but with a certain arbitrariness (*secundum humanum placitum*) parallel to that of linguistic signification. After the giving of the Law, things were more determined.[169] And although Thomas holds that, in contrast to the Old Law, "the decrees of the New Law, which chiefly consist in faith and the

[167] ST III.73.3 cor.
[168] Cf ST I.38.
[169] ST I-II.102.1 and 2, ST II-II.85.1, II-II.85.4.

love of God, are reasonable out of the very nature of the act," it would seem that this would not have to apply absolutely to the New Law as regards sacraments; particularly as there are things in any law, says Thomas, which do not make sense in themselves singly, but only as part of a larger whole.[170] And Thomas, of course, believed that the sacramental system as we have it, albeit with some non-essential changes, has come down to us as a whole from Christ who instituted it through the Apostles, handed on under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.[171] Thus in some places he draws the meaning of these signs from the way the various parts of the sacramental system work.[172] In any system of signification, the difference between the signs is part of the way they signify, and we find this in the sacramental system too, as we shall see in the next sub-section.

7.3.3.1 How Thomas treats the effects of the Eucharist

These two points are important as we come to conclude this chapter on the working of the Eucharist. For, although this explanation of how the Eucharist works is based directly on Thomas' explicit statements, it is not the approach that we get in the *Summa* when he deals specifically with the effects of the Eucharist. The reason for this is that our explanation was starting with the Eucharist to try to understand the working of the sacramental system as a whole, and was seeing baptism and the Eucharist as working together. In the *Summa* Thomas is considering the Eucharist as a specific sacrament, and indeed often contrasts the effects of the Eucharist with those of baptism.

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[170] ST I-II.102.1 ad 1, 102.2 ad 3; cf ST III.64.2 ad 2.

[171] ST III.64.2 cor, ad 1 and ad 3; cf III.78.3 sed contra and ad 9, and the sed contra to III.83.2, 3, 4, and 5. Liam G. Walsh, "Liturgy in the Theology of St. Thomas," *The Thomist* 38 (1974): 560-561.

[172] E.g. ST III.79.3 ad 2, 79.5 ad 1.

Thus, although we have argued that what we are presented with in the Eucharist is a whole, in the *Summa* question Thomas seems at the beginning to break apart this unity, for he regularly appeals to four aspects of the sacrament to argue for its effects, dividing them as follows. There are those things out of which the sacrament has an effect, namely, (i) that which is contained (Christ) and (ii) that which is represented (the passion), and those things through which the sacrament has an effect, namely (iii) the use of the sacrament (as food and drink) and (iv) its species (bread and wine, which symbolize unity).[173]

However, the division is only apparent. When he gets to asking if the Eucharist removes mortal sin, after a *sed contra* about eating and drinking condemnation on oneself, he begins by saying that Christ's passion (the source of the sacrament's efficacy) in itself has the power to overcome original sin, with the rider that there should be no impediment in the recipient. Then he argues from the symbolism of the sacrament to what that impediment would be: as the sacrament is given under the form of spiritual food, it can only be meaningfully taken by the spiritually living; as it is about union with Christ, it can only be meaningfully taken by one who is not in mortal sin.[174] Baptism, on the other hand, is spiritual birth, and is given in the manner of cleansing, and so is properly received by those who are not yet spiritually alive, and who need to be cleansed of sin.[175] It is the system as a whole that gives meaning to the various elements, and determines which of the possible meanings are taken into account. (For instance, could not the sharing of food symbolize reconciliation, rather than eating and drinking symbolizing that one

[173] ST III.79.2 cor, cf 79.1 cor.
[174] ST III.79.3 cor. Here we definitely have the use of the sacrament and the content; the mention of being united may be an allusion to the unity symbolized by the bread and wine.
[175] ST III.79.3 ad 1.

is already alive? Or do bread and wine have to symbolize unity?)

It is only with this approach that we can return to the first article, which seems to divide these four aspects and to make some unjustifiable claims in doing so. For instance, when asking whether the Eucharist confers grace, Thomas holds that since the sacrament is transmitted under the form of food and drink, "every effect that material food and drink produce with regard to bodily life, namely, that it sustains, causes growth, repairs, and delights, this sacrament does totally with respect to spiritual life."[176] Thomas is clear that a metaphor is alike is some respects and different in others, so, even if we hold that sacraments cause what they signify, this argument seems weak, if not invalid. But, as we have seen, spiritual food is the primary referent, and material food is food only by analogy, and the Eucharist is the bread of life only because the body of Christ, which it really contains, is hypostatically united to the Word; further, this analogous quality of "food" enables it to replace material "food" in our economy, and lift it from being carnal to spiritual. So the argument should be expanded something like this. This sacrament contains Christ, who brings the life of grace to the world. But it contains Christ under the form of bodily food, so that we, who are focussed on bodies, can perceive and desire Christ as spiritual food. Now, when one considers spiritual food, one can think of it as life-giving along the lines of bodily food, not because bodily food is the primary referent of "food," but because we know bodily food better. Thus, by thinking of food, all these life-giving possibilities are open to us: sustenance, growth, repair and delight. And these are the sort of changes (among many) that grace brings about in us. Thus, because we are open to Christ as food, we are open to the grace Christ brings in those ways. This argument is not a separate one from the first point in the

[176] ST III.79.1 cor.

corpus, that the sacrament contains Christ. Rather, it is a specification of it: the sacrament contains Christ, who confers grace, and precisely because of the manner of use of the sacrament, when we receive it properly, we receive grace.

Now, in the eight articles devoted to the effects of the Eucharist, Thomas never simply relies on the fact that it contains Christ and reminds us of his passion. In all the articles the attributes of food and drink and of the unity of charity implied by the bread and wine play a part, except the seventh, which is about the effects of the Eucharist, not as sacrament, but as sacrifice. The earlier discussion about convenant and satisfaction, which gain their efficacy from the passion, is true, and their results are referred to in this question.[177] But this question is primarily about the application of these things to us, an application that comes about through a union with *Christus passus*, a union of the will (through charity) and through knowledge, for it is through signs. Thomas does not dwell on knowledge explicitly here, but we have seen his opposition to the practice of communicating infants; moreover, he holds that a person who unknowingly consumes a consecrated host (or indeed, an animal that does so) does not receive even sacramentally, let alone spiritually.[178]

[177] ST III.79.2 cor; III.79.5.
[178] ST III.80.3 ad 3.

CHAPTER EIGHT

A GENERAL THEORY OF SACRAMENTAL EFFICACY

8.0 Reconciling the inductive and the general approaches

The preceding chapter gave an account of the workings of the Eucharist as a key to understanding sacramental efficacy in general, but relied very little on the treatise on the sacraments in general found in the *Summa*, and only referred briefly to its tract on the Eucharist. Our approach so far has been inductive, going from specific cases; in the *Summa* Thomas starts with the most general and then works down to the particular. It is important to reconcile the results of the two approaches.

This chapter, therefore, will begin with the key question, whether sacraments cause grace, where we shall see that Thomas is talking about the gift object and the spirit of the gift. Then we shall consider the cases where the gift object of the sacrament and grace are given separately: fiction and "revival," the *votum sacramenti*, and the sacraments of the Old Law. As a supplement to understanding the sacraments of the Old Law, we shall consider Jacques Derrida's approach to the gift, which will also provide the occasion for bringing together a number of other themes, including the very possibility of the gift itself. The chapter and the thesis will then conclude by returning to Chauvet, arguing that he and Thomas actually have a common project, and when that project is kept in mind, the comparatively small differences, which Chauvet proclaims so loudly, actually help us to see what is lost when we stop speaking of sacraments on causes.

8.1 The conferral of grace in a unified sacrament

8.1.1 The unity of the sacrament as a sign

Reversing what he said in the *Scriptum*, in the first article on the nature of the sacraments in the *Summa*, Thomas places sacraments in the genus of sign, and then in the second adds causality, but as signified: "the sign of a sacred thing insofar as it is sanctifying human beings."[1] This definition excludes things like sprinkling with holy water, but includes the sacraments of the Old Law.[2] This implies that it is not in their ritual nature that the sacraments of the New Law are to be distinguished from the sacraments of the Old, but in their relation to Christ, as we shall see later in this chapter.[3] Moreover, it presumes the connection with worship found in a definition in *Prima Secundae*. [4] For sacraments are ordered towards dealing with sin and Christian worship, although sometimes more directly towards one than the other.[5]

Having established this, Thomas makes great efforts to show that sacraments are one (despite divisions into word and sensible things; past, present and future signfications), and that they should never be regarded as mere things rather

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1 ST III.60.1 cor, III.60.2 cor, cf *Scriptum* 4.1.1.1.1 cor, 4.1.1.1.3 cor. This change is discussed by Hyacinthe-François Dondaine, "La définition des sacrements dans la Somme Théologique," *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 31 (1947): 219-226. At 223n 1 he comments that some outside the Thomist tradition (Bartmann, Gautier, Pesch) have thought that this is introducing efficacy in the definition as the specific difference. Pierre-Marie Gy OP considers that the shift in focus is from the effect of the sacrament (grace) to the cause (Christ). "Divergences de théologie sacramentaire autour de S.Thomas," in *Ordo Sapientiae et Amoris: Image et message de saint Thomas d'Aquin à travers les récents études historiques, herméneutiques, et doctrinales: homage au professeur Jean-Pierre Torrell OP à l'occasion de son 65e anniversaire*, ed. Carlos-Josaphat Pinto de Oliveira OP (Fribourg: Éditions Universitaires, 1993), 427n 9.

2 ST III.60.2 ad 2. See also Benoît-Dominique de la Soujeole OP, "The Importance of the Definition of Sacraments as Signs," in *Ressourcement Thomism: Sacred Doctrine, the Sacraments and the Moral Life: Essays in Honor of Romanus Cessario OP*, Reinhard Hütter and Matthew Levering (Washington: Catholic Univerity of America Press, 2010), 128-130, and Schillebeeckx, *L'économie*, 114-115.

3 Cf Schillebeeckx, *L'économie*, 142-143. Chauvet, without reference to Thomas, insists upon the same. 286-289.

4 ST I-II.102.5 cor, Schillebeeckx, *L'économie*, 117.

5 Penance, for instance, directly towards sin, indirectly towards worship, but *vice versa* with baptism. ST III.63.4 ad 1, III.63.6 cor.

than signs (so it is the meaning of the words, rather than the *voces*, that matters).[6] Then there is a question on the necessity of grace, which appeals to our bodies and our fallenness - this will be important when dealing later with Abraham.[7]

8.1.2 The unity of the giving of the gift object and of grace

The third question is on the principal effect of the sacraments: grace. The first article asks *whether* the sacraments of the New Law cause grace, and what we learn about *how* they do is incidental. We would expect a statement that sacraments are an extension of the visible mission that give rise to an invisible mission, or that through them a gift object is given graciously that graces us. In fact, we get the latter, but we have to look closely.

Thomas' argument relies on Christic incorporation through baptism (and by the same logic through the other sacraments).

> One must say that the sacraments of the New Law cause grace in some way. For it is obvious that through the sacraments of the New Law a human being is incorporated into Christ, just as the Apostle says about baptism (2 Gal 3) "All of you who were baptized in Christ have clothed yourselves in Christ." But a human being is not made a member of Christ except through grace.[8]

We can take the last sentence as expressing the same idea as an earlier statement: "And this itself is of grace: that it is granted to a human being to be reborn in Christ."[9] Sacraments are actualisations of God's grace towards the recipients, and thus "cause grace in some [as yet unspecified] way."

Thomas opposes this result that is achieved by the sacrament doing something (*operando*) to the mere signifying of a conventional sign (like the lead penny), after whose application God produces (*operatur*) grace in the soul. We are

6 ST III.60.6 ad 2l III.60.3; III.60.7-8.
7 ST III.61, especially 61.1 cor, 2 cor..
8 ST III.62.1 cor.
9 ST III.19.4 ad 3.

then told that sacraments are instrumental causes, and that the effect therefore is assimilated to the principal cause: if God's grace (or God acting graciously) is the principal cause, the recipient of the sacrament will end up graced.

This is reflected in the response to the first objection, which deals with how, as effects are signs of causes, a cause can be a sign. An instrumental cause is both a cause and, insofar as it is moved by the principal agent, an effect: and as effect it is a sign of the principal agent. We must now apply this to a sacrament like baptism, and the application is complicated because the instrumental cause in this case is a sign.[10] We shall need to distinguish clearly between signs that are arbitrarily chosen ("conventional signs") and signs that are effects ("effect signs").

The washing, in bestowing character, is God's instrumental cause, and it is an instrumental cause precisely as the conventional sign used by God. This is exactly the way that the lead penny causes the giving of the hundred pounds, and the book the investiture as canon.[11] Thomas admits that this is part of the way that sacraments work, but taken by itself, it is not the way that sacraments cause grace, "as is clear from many authorities of the saints."[12]

The bestowal of character is not just any sort of effect that God produces, but a configuration to Christ for the salvation of the individual concerned (as distinct

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[10] Thomas will later explain that words (*voces*) are instrumental causes that allow spiritual realities to be formed in those who receive them. ST III.62.4 ad 1. The argument obviously extends to other signs as well; after all, the very definition of a sign includes causing something in the mind (cf ST III.63.1 obj 2).

[11] Although Chauvet goes to great lengths to explain this sort of symbolic conferral of social status, Thomas takes it for granted. *Pace* William J Courtenay, Thomas does not reject Bernard's analogy because he does not appreciate how a power can reside (or at least flow through) an arbitrarily chosen object: he rejects it because grace is given in a different way. "Sacrament, Symbol and Causality in Bernard of Clairvaux" in *Covenant and Causality in Medieval Thought: Studies in Theology, Philosophy and Economic Practice*, (London: Variorum Reprints, 1984), 111-122.

[12] ST III.62.1 cor. As William J Courtenay points out, Thomas has cited this text from Bernard twice before, *Scriptum* 4.1.1.4.1 obj 1 and ad 1; *De Veritate* 27.4 obj 1 and ad 1. As these citations are objections, we get a fuller reply, saying that this is true for sacraments as signs, but there is more at stake. Courtenay holds that Thomas becomes less accepting of this text over time. "Sacrament, Symbol and Causality," 118-120.

even from a *gratia gratis data*) and so is an effect of God's grace, and thus an "effect sign" of God's grace. We should recall that in the question on *gratia* (gratitude), *effectus* was the gift object; this was paired with the more important *affectus* or spirit of the gift.[13]

God's grace, as we have seen, posits something in the soul.[14] For the moment I shall refer to what is posited in the soul simply as "debt," because referring to its other attributes may cause confusion. Debt is caused by a gift, and the special sort of debt we call grace is caused by a gift that chooses us for salvation, in this case, character. Thus grace is caused by the sacrament actually doing something (*operando*), that is, by producing character. Grace is produced by something that is an "effect sign" of grace, and so sacraments cause what they signify (*efficiunt quod figurant*).

Thomas has proved what he needs, and stops here. But grace as debt is merely grace as habitus. For it to become act (and the *actus gratiae* is thanksgiving) the recipient must be aware of the *affectus* of the donor, and while that nature of the *effectus* will be important, one must also look for some sign in the act of giving.[15] Thus being an "effect sign" is not superfluous to the working of the sacrament, but the eschatological aspect of the sacramental sign helps us see what the *effectus* is for and thus appreciate its value, and the way the sacrament recalls the passion reminds us of the love with which the sacrament is given to us - Thomas insists that sacraments have efficacy from Christ's passion.[16] We have seen how important it is for the different working of the sacraments that baptism is given by washing, and the

[13] ST II-II.106.5.
[14] ST I-II.110.1 cor.
[15] ST II-II.106.5 ad 3.
[16] ST III.62.5

Eucharist under the form of bread and wine. But the working of the sacrament cannot be reduced to this: sacraments are not merely signs.

The use of different words to describe the same situation confirms this reading that places God's desire to give at the heart of the issue, even if it seems to be behind the claim of some theologians that character confers a "title" to grace.[17]

> A subject is attributed to an accident bearing in mind that to which it proximately disposes, not that to which it disposes remotely or indirectly. But character directly and proximately disposes the soul to carry out those things which are of divine worship; and because these are not suitably done without the help of grace (for, as it is said in John 4, "those who adore God ought (*oportet*) to adore in spirit and truth"), as a consequence the divine generosity bestows (*largitas . . . largitur*) grace upon those receiving character, through which they may worthily carry out those things to which they are being deputed. And thus it is better to attribute a subject to character bearing in mind the actions pertaining to the divine cult than to do so bearing in mind grace.[18]

Thomas is not here primarily explaining the causal connection between grace and character, but investigating the subject of character.[19] We first note that the bestowal of character and grace are simultaneous, as is shown by the use of present verbs and participles (*recipientibus, largitur, deputantur*). Grace is bestowed in the same act as the bestowal of character and for the same purpose (worship).[20] This one act has one cause, the divine generosity, emphasized by repetition (*largitas . . . largitur*). Something as noble as participation in divine worship cannot but be given graciously and thus with grace.[21] This is quite the opposite of the idea that the

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[17] John M. Donahue, "Sacramental Character," 464, and Toshiyuki Miyakawa, "The Ecclesial Meaning," 440. Schillebeeckx notes that the scholastics may have spoken of a "disposition" to grace, but never a "right" or "title." *Christ the Sacrament*, 172n 20.

[18] ST III.63. 4 ad 1.

[19] Thus he shows that that the essence of character does not lie in its relation to grace, but in its marking out someone for worship. After all, it is *res et sacramentum*: as *res* it is a signing, a deputation to worship; as *sacramentum* it is in the genus of sign, and causality should not enter its definition.

[20] Later Thomas points out the grace follows character as the effect of a form follows its generation. ST III.69.10 cor.

[21] But, *pace* A B Boulanger OP, this simultaneity does not mean that character and grace cause each other (even if in different ways). Character is produced graciously, but grace (as something in the soul) does not cause character, but perfects it. "Notes Explicatives" in Thomas Aquinas, *La somme théologique, Le Baptême et la confirmation: 3a QQ66-72*, tr. A B Boulanger OP , Revue des Jeunes (Paris: Desclée, 1929), 336-337.

recipient is in any way "owed" grace or has a title to it.

As for the choice of words here, remember that Thomas does not have our terms "spirit of the gift" and "gift object;" *affectus* is too vague to use here; and in this context *gratia* would pre-empt the answer. *Largitas*, which has the advantage of having the cognate verb *largitur*, works well. However, in both cases we can only follow the argument if we already understand his teaching on grace and gift well enough to know what to expect.

If we want to compare this to earlier theories, it has elements of both the "intentional dispositive causality" described by Leeming, and "dispositive physical causality." In the former, "the sacraments express the divine intention to sanctify, and by expressing it produce the sanctity expressed;"[22] in the latter, "the sacraments, by placing the symbolic reality in the recipient of the sacraments, cause a real change or 'disposition' which, in virtue of God's ordinary supernatural providence, carries grace with it unless there be an impediment of ill-will."[23] The "symbolic reality" is, of course, the *res et sacramentum* which Leeming, in a move that anticipates Chauvet, would prefer to call a particular "union with the Church."[24] However, the very fact that two theories are needed to express what we have covered in one shows that, not understanding the unity of the gift, these pre-conciliar theologians were not getting to the heart of the matter. There was still somehow a separation of the giving of the gift-object and the giving of the spirit of the gift, revealed in statements such as sacraments cause "an infallible designation" that grace should be given.[25]

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[22] Leeming, *Sacramental Theology*, 289-290.
[23] Leeming, *Sacramental Theology*, 289.
[24] Leeming, *Sacramental Theology*, 355.
[25] Leeming, *Sacramental Theology*, 290. Another attempt at dispositive intentional causality, combined this time with a sort of perfective physical causality, holds that in order for the divine *imperium* to heal, etc., in Christ, there must be something visible presented to the one to be healed. Hence the human soul of Christ must also imperate, and must do so by positing some external sign. Because the ordained in the Church possess sacramental character, they are habitual

There is one more complication to this article. In response to the second objection, that material things cannot affect a spiritual reality like the mind, Thomas replies that instrumental causes have two actions, their own proper one and an instrumental one in virtue of the principal agent, but that the the instrumental action is achieved through the proper one, as a saw makes a bed by cutting. When it comes to baptismal water, as the human being is a unity composed of body and soul, the action that touches the body can also affect the soul, and so Thomas can now justify the saying of Augustine found in the *sed contra*: the water "touches the body and washes the heart." [26] But, especially against the proponents of perfective physical causality, we must keep in mind that this is not an explanation of sacramental causality, even less a suggestion that the water is elevated to perform another operation.[27] Rather, as the citation at the end shows, it is a reconciliation of the Aristotelian category of instrumental cause with the text from Augustine used in the *sed contra*: Thomas often has to reverentially expound the rhetorical devices Augustine uses when talking about effects upon the body and the soul.[28]

This is one of the more important articles in the *Summa*, but also one of the more obscure ones. As Lafont laments, "We believe that we find here for the first time since the beginning of our study a real deficit in the construction of Saint Thomas."[29]

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instruments of Christ, taken up by Christ as instruments. Thus when they exercise *imperium* to effect an external sacramental sign (as designated by Christ through the Church) and intend to do what the Church does, their signifying action is taken up, elevated by the principal cause (Christ) and so has power to act on the human soul. John F Gallagher CM, *Significando Causant: A Study of Sacramental Efficiency* (Fribourg: The University Press, 1965), 190-220. That he should talk of *imperium* whereas we talk of gift is the first of many differences.

[26] ST III.62.1 sed contra , ad 2.

[27] Rudi te Velde makes it perfectly clear that Thomas does not understand instrumental causality in a way that gives an additional power and operation to the instrument. *Participation and Substantiality*, 172-173.

[28] For example, ST III.8.4 ad 3; III.62.5 ad 1; *Super Ioannem* 5.5 (M791), 6.7 (M973)

[29] Lafont, *Structures*, 450.

8.1.2 Ensuring the unity of the giver

The remaining five articles in this question clarify the first.

Firstly, Thomas makes clear that sacramental grace is different from "grace, virtues and gifts", but only as a specific form of the general genus of sanctifying grace, by being directed to specifically Christian goals: dealing with worship and the liability to punishment - both these activities are symbolic.[30] Here - and again in the last question on the number of the sacraments, where Thomas elaborates a system whose apex is the Eucharist[31] - we get a sense of the way the different symbols used in the sacraments excite grace in different ways - which of course is far more fully developed as he treats each sacrament individually.[32] For sacraments bestow upon us the fulness not only of grace but also of truth.

In the next two articles, Thomas preserves others traditional statements about sacraments, but mainly through reverential exposition: they "contain" grace;[33] and they have a power to cause grace.[34] But this "power to cause grace" is "spiritual," that is, at the level of meaning, the way that something proceding from a mind can, by something in the sensory realm, a word (*voce sensibili*), affect the mind of another.[35] Thomas illustrates this by considering the power the water gained when Christ was baptized in it, and we have already seen that this power works at the symbolic level: all water can now symbolize something more because of the "blessing" it received at the baptism of Christ.[36] These examples would seem to

[30] ST III.62.2.
[31] ST III.65.
[32] Lafont complains that the theologically richer treatment of the individual sacraments should have had a stronger influence on the general question on the causation of grace. *Structures*, 450-453.
[33] ST III.62.3.
[34] ST III.62.4.
[35] ST III.62.4 cor.
[36] ST III.62.4 ad 3, cf 6.3.3.

contradict Courtenay's claim that Thomas cannot see that merely conventional signs have power and that this power can cause things.[37] When Thomas dismisses Bernard's example as being merely about signs, he is not saying that the book given to the canon does not cause something, nor that this sort of causality is not happening in the sacraments; rather, he is saying that the causality responsible for the grace given by the sacrament is of a different kind.[38]

As far as the remaining questions are concerned, the significant parts of the question on character we have already covered, and the question on the cause of the sacraments makes it clear that God is always the cause, as befits gifts given graciously, so only Christ in his divinity can institute the sacraments as author, although he does so in his humanity instrumentally.[39] By making sacraments principally actions of God, the lack of grace, or even of faith - but not of intention - in the minister does not impede the effect of the sacrament.

8.2 The breakdown of sacramental unity

Thomas emphasizes the unity of the sacrament; but we need to examine those cases when the bestowal of grace and of character (or its equivalent) are somehow separated. There are three cases in particular of this separation.

- The administration of the sacrament does not immediately bring grace, but grace may follow from the sacrament at a later date. The failure to receive grace is often ascribed to "fiction;" the later reception of grace, when the fiction recedes, is often misleadingly referred to as the "revival" of the sacrament.[40]

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37 Courtenay, "Sacrament, Symbol and Causality," 111-122.
38 As he makes clear at *De Veritate* 27.4 ad 1.
39 ST III.64.1-2; III.64.3-4; III.64.5, III.64.9; III.64.8.
40 Schillebeeckx in particular objects to this term. *Christ the Sacrament*, 147.

- The *votum sacramenti*, (a phrase that contains an element of will not found in the standard English counterpart "desire for the sacrament") whereby the grace of the sacrament precedes the actual administration of the sacrament which, due to, say, intervening death, may never happen. The question of salvation outside the visible Church is a closely related issue.

- The efficacy of the sacraments of the Old Law, particularly circumcision, which Thomas considers closely.

8.2.1 The splitting of character and grace by fiction

8.2.1.1 Grace comes with the removal of the impediment

As mentioned earlier, Thomas talks of the unity of the sacrament by comparing character to a form (like the form of a heavy object) and grace to the effect of a form (like the falling of the heavy object). But the comparison is introduced to explain disunity, when this single gift of grace and character is split into two through fiction.[41] The fiction is likened to an impediment to the heavy object: as soon as the impediment is removed, the object begins to fall, and as soon as fiction is removed by repentance, baptism brings grace as its effect.[42]

Thomas holds that fiction can arise because God does not force his gifts on us. An adult baptized without wanting to receive the sacrament is not baptized at all, and should be rebaptized; someone who has a will against the effect of the sacrament will not receive the effect.[43] At this level the explanation of how the sacrament brings about its effect once the fiction stops is easy, as we have just seen. Although it

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41 Ganoczy has the useful image of the "disturbance" of the communication that should take place in the sacrament, *An Introduction to Catholic Sacramental Theology*, 164.

42 ST III.69.10 cor.

43 ST III.68.7 ad 2, 69.9 cor.

is still common to talk of the "revival" of the sacrament in such a case, on analogy with the "revival" of good works after repentance, Thomas insists that baptism, as God's work, was never dead.[44]

Also from the point of view of gift, someone who receives the sacrament but with a will contrary to its spiritual and gracious nature (as distinct from the infant who does not receive it with any will) cannot accept it as a gracious gift and cannot receive the Holy Spirit as the spirit of the gift. A person, of course, may accept baptism as a gift of a lower sort (for instance, in the hope of physical healing), and while that could generate gratitude, it would be "carnal" rather than "spiritual."[45]

8.2.1.2 God's will towards the recipient is always gratuitous

But there is something more subtle at work here. Thomas recalls that "character" orginally referred to the brand on the soldier identifying him as belonging to one army and not the other, with the brand remaining after the fight is over, as a sign of glory to the victors and marking the defeated for punishment; and on analogy he argues that character, which deputes us to the cult of God in this life, remains after the goal of that cult has been obtained, in the blessed to their glory, and in the damned to their ignominy.[46] Again, Thomas, following 1 Corinthians, holds that reception of the Eucharist has vastly different outcomes for the just and for the sinner.[47] Just as in the one who is justified, it is a sign of God's favour, so also in the one who poses an obstacle, it is a sign of God's will to punish, of God's disfavour. It is the same thing, the same power, but with two different meanings. Thus this

[44] ST III.69.10 ad 1, cf. III.89.4-6. Schillebeeckx too insists that this work was never dead. *Christ the Sacrament*, 147.

[45] Cf ST III.68.8 ad 3, 69.6 obj 4 and ad 4.

[46] ST III.63.5 ad 3.

[47] "Sumunt boni, sumunt mali,/sorte tamen inaequali,/vitae vel interitus;/mors est malis, vita bonis;/ vide, paris sumptionis/quam dispar sit exitus." *Lauda Sion*, the sequence for Corpus Christi.

spiritual good can be considered analogous to the temporal goods (and ills), through which the good are led to beatitude, and the evil are not. It has a different meaning in a different economy.

Further, Thomas does not talk of God's grace being simply frustrated by the one who imposes an impediment, but he talks of God actually withdrawing his favour; similarly, God does not merely will to give a reward that is refused, but actively wills to punish.[48] God's gift of character to that person is still gratuitous, in the sense of being inscrutable, but given to the person who refuses the effect to which it is primarily ordered, it has another effect, *per accidens* and yet part of God's order, and this effect is willed by God for as long as the perverse will of recipient endures. There is a "poison in the gift," and yet the very poison may also be medicinal, as God's punishments for those in still on pilgrimage often are.

In the anthropological literature, the "poison in the gift" is debt. God's gift always leaves a debt, but, as Seneca and Thomas note, friends are happy to be in debt to each other.[49] Reception of a sacrament implies the intention to receive what the Church is offering, a submission to the Church to some extent. Even if it is defective, there must be some "faith" that leads one to ask for the sacrament from the Church, although such faith will necessarily be unformed.[50] Thus each sacrament brings its debt, a set of obligations, but without charity the debt will be a burden.[51] These obligations are incurred even in the case of the baptism of infants, and so the children of Jews and non-believers should not be baptized against their parents wishes, because of the likelihood that they would "return to infidelity," which would

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48 ST II-II.24.10 cor.

49 ST II-II.106.4 cor, citing Seneca *De Beneficiis* 4.40.5, 106.6 ad 2 .

50 ST III.68.8 ad 2 and ad 3; Cf Chauvet.

51 Those in the New Law who lack charity will need to be motivated by fear of punishment and temporal promises: ST I-II.107.1 ad 2. Cf 4.4.1, n101.

be dangerous for them.[52] This danger only makes sense due to the obligation to believe imposed by baptism.

As Thomas compares the one who has faith without charity to the ones for whom the Old Law was given, the obligations of the Christian life would, for such a baptized person, be experienced as the same sort of burden as the Old Law was for the carnal Jews, and thus be a means of leading them to formed faith.[53]

Alternatively, we can consider fiction as a form of hypocrisy, which Thomas defines as adopting a *persona* different from what one is.[54] Thus it is an appropriate way of looking at falsehood in baptism, when when one should put on Christ. In fact, this hypocrisy means that there are two subjects or *personae* in baptism, instead of one, and I want to suggest that this breaks the unity of the sacrament. It is also worth noting that character arose in theology to explain fiction, rather than to explain true baptism. It is in fictitious baptism that we have one subject giving a gift object to another subject, which is the sort of gift that Derrida declares to be impossible, as we shall see at 8.3.

An example of the medicinal, almost purgative, quality of a sacrament can be seen in the closely related example of someone who receives the Eucharist while in mortal sin, but unaware of it, by, for instance, being imperfectly contrite. The devout and reverent reception of the Eucharist could bring about a grace of charity, which would perfect the contrition (a painful process, we might add) and cause forgiveness.[55]

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52 ST III.71.1 ad 3, 68.10 cor. Cf the strong obligation on godparents, III.67.8 cor.
53 ST I-II.107.1 ad 2.
54 ST II-II.111.2 cor.
55 ST III.79.3 cor.

8.2.2 The *votum sacramenti*

8.2.2.1 The explicit *votum*

Thomas does not consider receiving grace through the *votum sacramenti* to be an exceptional or abnormal thing, as we see in his commentary on John. Augustine has offered two mystical interpretations of the Lazarus story, in the second of which the coming forth of Lazarus is by the act of confessing. Lazarus comes forward, brought to life in the grace of God, but still bound, that is, still *reus* (liable to punishment), and he is sent to the disciples (the ministry of the priests) to be unbound (by absolution). However, Thomas notes that some people (*quidam*) have followed through this interpretation to conclude that God forgives sin and absolves from eternal punishment through the interior working of grace, and that "priests by the power of the keys do nothing more than absolve from part of the temporal punishment."[56]

Thomas rejects this position as seriously undervaluing the keys of the Church. As a sacrament of the New Law, penance must confer grace. He draws a comparison with baptism, where the priest washes and says the words, and Christ interiorly baptizes. He then calls this comparison into doubt, because in most cases (*plerumque*) it is children who are baptized, but it is adults who come seeking absolution, who, "in most cases have obtained remission of their sins beforehand through contrition."[57] But, says Thomas, if we diligently consider things, and take the case of adults for both sacraments, there is a parallel at every stage. For one who is perfectly disposed to the forgiveness of sins, the *votum* obtains this forgiveness, and when they receive the sacrament, although the sacrament, considered by itself,

[56] *Super Ioannem* 11.6 (M1560-1561)

[57] Chauvet has pointed out how a misunderstanding of this leads to a theology of the sacraments that makes them more efficacious for people who are "less converted." *Symbol and Sacrament*, 436.

forgives sins, this does not take place here, but rather there is an increase of grace. But the one who is not perfectly disposed obtains forgiveness in the act of receiving the sacrament through its power (*virtus*), unless fiction poses an obstacle to the Holy Spirit. And, adds Thomas, things happen "similarly in the Eucharist, in extreme unction, and *in aliis sacramentis*."[58]

Are, then, sacraments only for the imperfectly disposed? We can return to the Eucharist, where things happen "similarly." We are familiar with the distinction between spiritual and sacramental eating. Thomas notes that only a human being can spiritually receive the Eucharist; although angels desire to be fed on the Word of God, they cannot desire the Eucharist or spiritually receive it, because the Eucharist is a sacrament, something corporeal.[59] Thus implicit in the *votum* for the Eucharist is the desire for spiritual food under the form of material food, and we have seen how important for Thomas this redirection of desire is. Similarly, the *votum* for the sacrament of penance is not a mere desire for forgiveness, but a resolution to place oneself under the keys of the Church so that one's satisfaction would be united with the satisfaction of Christ, without which there is no true contrition.[60]

But if it were simply a matter of redirecting desire, this would not explain the way the *votum* brings grace. Grace comes gratuitously; the *votum* can only be effective if there is a sense of the graciousness of God's gift. Let us recall that for Thomas gratitude can arise for something that is not yet given, merely promised - although of course an even greater gratitude arises when the promised gift is actually received.[61] The *votum* is the response to a sacrament, not yet received, but really

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[58] *Super Ioannem* 11.6 (M1561-1562)
[59] ST III.80.2 cor.
[60] ST III.69.1 ad 1, 84.7 ad 2, 90.3 obj 2.
[61] ST II-II.88.5 ad 2.

promised and offered, and so truly given. And precisely because the *votum* is a response, not just to the gift of the grace of the sacrament, but to the gift of the sacrament itself, it is a *votum* that seeks to fulfil itself when the appropriate opportunity arises. There may be reasons for postponing a sacrament: baptism may be postponed so that it is celebrated at a fitting time in the liturgical year, and it should be postponed to avoid the sin of simony (even if it means dying without actually receiving the sacrament);[62] similarly, one may postpone sacramental reception of the Eucharist so as to be better prepared, but to decide never to receive sacramentally undermines the whole concept of spiritual reception, and not to receive out of contempt of the sacrament is not the saving *votum* at all, but rather a sin.[63] Thus there is no problem with the sacrament re-ordering desire and eliciting gratitude before its actual reception, but in both cases this is only possible through the institution and the offering of the sacrament.[64]

8.2.2.2 The implicit *votum*

Of course, so far I have spoken of an explicit *votum* made by one who knows of the sacrament and believes in its *virtus*. Thomas also allows for an implicit *votum*. For Thomas, the minimum content required for faith is that God exists and has providence concerning human salvation (basing himself on Heb 11:6).[65] From what has been said it is clear that this would be less effective in changing desire or eliciting gratitude, but its possibility can easily be admitted. This category obviously

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62 ST III.68.3 cor, II-II.100.2 ad 1.

63 ST III.80.10 cor, ad 3, 80.11 cor.

64 Leeming, despite coming close to our position on sacraments, holds that catechumens receive grace because they learn to say the act of contrition. *Sacramental Theology,* 357-358. This sort of example shows how, without grasping the working of the gift, one misses the real meaning of Thomas' theology of the sacraments.

65 ST II-II.1.7 cor.

applies to people who have no real knowledge of the Gospel;[66] it would also seem to cover the people of the Old Law, but at least in one case Thomas admits them as a third category, neither *in re* nor *in voto*, but *in figura*. This will be dealt with at length in a later section.

8.2.2.3 For which sacraments can there be an effective *votum*?

We have seen that reception of grace before the sacrament takes place in baptism, penance, "Eucharist, extreme unction and *in aliis sacramentis*."[67] Thomas does not say whether he means "the other sacraments" (all of them), or only some. Schillebeeckx holds that it is impossible to receive the effect of orders or marriage without receiving the sacrament itself, because one cannot carry out the specific functions of a priest or a spouse without having been empowered or authorised by the sacrament.[68] However, not only would that leave only confirmation as the possible referent of "other sacraments," but, more importantly, it seems that Schillebeeckx here has not distinguished between the effects of receiving the *res et sacramentum* and the effects of receiving the *res sacramenti*. The one who has received baptism of desire may not carry out the functions of the baptised (such as receiving the Eucharist) without first receiving the sacrament of baptism itself, as Thomas insists would be the case even if someone were sanctified in their mother's womb.[69] Nonetheless, they have sanctifying grace and the associated ease in meeting

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66 Thomas is vague as to who would fall into this category apart from the most obvious cases, *De Veritate* 14.11 ad 1, cf I-II.76.2 . However, Stephen Bullivant argues that later developments by Francisco de Vitoria and Bartolomeo de las Casas were in keeping with this thought, and prepared the way for the declaration on the possibility of salvation outside the visible Church in *Lumen Gentium* 16. "*Sine culpa*? Vatican II and Inculpable Ignorance," *Theological Studies* 72 (March 2011): 70-86.

67 *Super Ioannem* 11.6 (M1562)

68 Schillebeeck, *Christ the Sacrament*, 143. A similar position is held by Leeming, *Sacramental Theology*, 118.

69 ST III.68.1 ad 3.

the demands of Christian morality - they have the *res sacramenti* without the *res et sacramentum*, character. Similarly, it makes perfect sense for someone to have the *res sacramenti* of marriage or orders, that is, the grace to carry out the duties of the sacrament, without having the *res et sacramentum*, the character of order or the participation in the marriage bond.[70] We see this time and time again in the person who remains chaste until marriage out of recognition of the dignity of marriage as a Christian sacrament, or the seminarian who joyfully accepts his duties out of love of the sharing in Christ's priesthood that he hopes to receive as a gift. Of course, such a person may never marry, or never get ordained, and, as these sacraments are necessary for the life of the Church as a whole, but not for every individual, there is also the further possibility that one could be very grateful for the offer of the gift, but choose not to receive it. And this may in fact explain why there is no sacrament of religious consecration, for the religious remains faithful to the vow of chastity by the grace given to the Church through the sacrament of marriage in a way almost the same as the single person before marriage. By a similar extension, the grace of orders extends to the whole Church, enabling its members to experience the ordering of the Church as a gracious gift rather than as a burden (and, as a more specific example, allowing parents to graciously accept that God has called their son to holy orders), even if only a small portion of believers actually receive the sacrament. And this is the richer meaning of the statement that contempt for any sacrament impedes salvation even if its reception is not necessary for the salvation of all individual believers.[71]

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[70] *Scriptum* 4.26.2.1 ad 5.
[71] ST III.65.4 obj 3 and ad 3.

8.2.3 The sacraments of the Old Law

In explicit contrast with the position he put forward in the *Scriptum*, in the *Summa* Thomas argues that circumcision not only, as was commonly acknowledged, removed original sin, but also bestowed sufficient grace to overcome the effects of sin and to live in accordance with the Law, his argument being that even the smallest amount of grace is enough for this.[72] So we can say that for Thomas there is an invisible mission of the Holy Spirit at circumcision, and thus there must also be an invisible mission of the Son. However, Thomas does not use these terms: we need to find these missions by analysing what he does say.

Thomas holds that circumcision works as a protestation of faith.[73] If we work from Thomas' analysis of both faith and its confession, two questions arise. What was the content of that faith? And why did God require circumcision as its most appropriate form of profession? The answers will shed light on the circumstances under which circumcision conferred grace, and how it could be an occasion of a double invisible mission.

8.2.3.1 Faith and the profession of faith

Circumcision was first given to Abraham as a sign of his faith. The content of this faith was that he would be (fore)father of the future Messiah, the source of blessing of all the nations of the earth.[74] This faith contains implicitly the Trinity (the title Christ implies not only the anointed, but also the anointer and the anointing[75]), the incarnation, and salvation, and so is salvific - Thomas specifically

[72] ST III.70.4 cor.
[73] ST III.70.4 cor.
[74] ST III.70.2 cor and ad 4.
[75] ST III.66.6 arg 2, and *Super I Corinthianos* 1.2 (M34) citing Ambrose, and with reference to Ps 44.8. Thomas often says that the anointing is the Holy Spirit (e.g. ST III.72.2 cor, *Super Psalmos* 26.1), and is clear that the Father is the one who anoints (*Super Isaiam* 61, cf *Catena in Lucam*, 9.4

notes that in the Old Testament not all the people would have had explicit knowledge of this content of the faith, but it was sufficient that they believed in the faith that their leaders had (who, like Abraham, would have known more through the gift of prophecy given to them).[76] And Thomas does explicitly note that circumcision was the sign of accepting such a faith.[77]

Profession is the outward act of faith. It is not absolutely essential, for one is joined to God sufficiently by the interior act. However, it is commanded by God, and, as is the case with affirmative commands, the act is necessary only under certain circumstances, even though the command to act (under those circumstances) is always valid.[78] Circumcision is God's response to the need to separate the believers from those who do not believe, for it is by the time of Abraham that the knowledge of God handed on from Adam has become so darkened by sin.[79] When Abraham's descendants become numerous enough to form a people, then they can be given the Law with all its other observances (for a law can only be given to a people) and thus experience both the wisdom of the law and also its inability to sanctify, so as to prepare for the coming Saviour.[80] These are the literal reasons for circumcision, to which can be added various others justifying its particular form, such as why it takes place in the "member of generation."[81] But there are also figurative reasons. While the rite itself of baptism was prefigured by the historical events of the crossing of the Red Sea and the pillar of cloud, they had no profession of faith and were not sacraments; circumcision prefigured and prepared for baptism as a profession of faith

(citing Cyril)). See also his comments on Ps 44 *ad locum*.

76 ST II-II.2.7 cor, 2.8 cor.

77 ST III.70.4 cor.

78 ST II-II.3.2 cor.

79 ST III.70.2 ad 1.

80 ST III.70.2 ad 2, cf. ST III.1.5 cor.

81 ST III.70.1 cor, 70.2 ad 3 and ad 4, 70.3 obj 1 and ad 1.

and the rite of aggregation to the congregation of believers.[82]

Those who are circumcised are thus joined to Christ in faith, but only if their faith was in circumcision and the other observances of the Old Law as shadows and figures, rather than in the rite itself.[83] Indeed, they can be spoken of as part of the body of Christ, in that very metaphorical sense of the term we described earlier. Since an invisible mission of the Son has the effect of some sort of illumination, it makes sense to talk of the act of acceptance of this faith in terms of an invisible mission of the Son. And if the faith truly reaches through to this Word, who is the *Verbum spirans Amorem*, then grace, the invisible mission of the Holy Spirit, surely follows.

The fact that Christ was yet to come is not a problem, because faith is in the soul, which, through the processes of apprehension and desire, can operate by final causes that are still in the future.[84]

Of course, those circumcised were normally only eight days old, and incapable of making a personal profession of faith; Thomas holds that some other person makes the profession of taking on the Abrahamic faith for them, along the lines of Christian baptism.[85] Thus we must presume in them some *habitus* of gratitude, not for a share in Christ's priesthood, but for this profession of faith made on their behalf. The connection with the gift of Christ is getting more and more tenuous, and we can see why Thomas, twice in the one article on circumcision and justification, speaks of a "more abundant grace" given in baptism.[86]

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82 ST III.70.1 cor, ad 2.
83 ST III.8.3
84 ST III.62.6 cor.
85 ST III.70.3 ad 3, 70.4 ad 2,.
86 ST III.70.4 cor and ad 5.

8.2.3.2 Problems with causality

According to Thomas, circumcision and all the other sacraments of the Old Law are deficient and weak (*egena et infirma*) in that they neither contain nor cause grace.[87] There is a metaphysical reason for this: an efficient cause cannot have a retroactive effect: something "that does not yet exist in the nature of things cannot have an effect in the order of the use of exterior things."[88] The power of Christ's passion cannot flow into a rite taking place before his passion, says Thomas, and the same would apply for his incarnation. Thomas therefore insists that no grace is conferred by the act of circumcision as such, but that it comes by means of the profession of faith: it is from the faith signified, not from the circumcision signifying.[89] He then points out two other differences arising from the same cause: unlike baptism, circumcision does not imprint character which incorporates somebody to Christ (and so they are incorporated only mentally by faith, but not in a bodily way), and baptism confers more abundant grace, as "the effect of a thing already present is greater than the effect of hope."[90]

Part of the problem with this presentation of circumcision is that Thomas so reads the Old Testament in the light of the New that the reader ends up projecting Christian faith in the Messiah back upon the people of the Old Covenant, and it is hard to see how much more grace is given in baptism than in circumcision. A similar thing happens in the case of the manna and the Eucharist: all who eat the manna and all who eat the Eucharist die bodily; all who eat the manna spiritually and all who eat the Eucharist spiritually gain spiritual life, so what is the difference? And Thomas'

87 ST I-II.103.2 cor, III.61.4 ad 2, cf Gal 4:9, cited frequently by Thomas in this regard.
88 ST III.62.6 cor.
89 ST III.70.4 cor.
90 ST III.70.4 cor.

answer is that more abundant grace is given from the reality of the gift rather than from the figure.[91]

Sometimes Thomas makes it seem so easy for those under the Old Law to acquire grace. We shall better understand the difficulty (and therefore the "more abundant grace" of the New Testament) if we consider from the insider's point of view the grace of one who knows that he lives in a world of figures (or "counterfeits"), and who has faith in the faith of Abraham, but no explicit faith in the incarnation: and probably no-one has examined this experience so searchingly as Jacques Derrida.

8.3 But can a gift be received?

8.3.1 The incompatibility of the gift and the Cartesian subject

It is widely held these days that *Given Time I* presents a critique of the gift that renders it impossible.[92] One of the few dissenting voices is Jacques Derrida, who protests that he did not say that the gift was impossible, but that it was "impossible for the gift to appear as such."[93] Closer attention to the text makes it clear that the gift cannot possibly appear in our world - or appears in our world as impossible - a world that consists of (Cartesian) subjects and objects. For the subject can only relate to others by dominating (like a king, particularly the Sun-

[91] *Super Ioannem* 6.6 (M954)

[92] Most notably, Jean-Luc Marion wrestles with the consequences of this in *Being Given: Toward a Phenomenology of Givenness*, tr. Jeffrey L Kosky (Stanford: Stanford Universtiy Press, 2002). Robyn Horner tries to re-order theology around this premise. *Rethinking God as Gift: Marion, Derrida, and the Limits of Phenomenology* (New York: Fordahm University Press, 2001). John Milbank is aware of the subtleties in *Given Time I*, while finding fault with the critique itself, but nonetheless takes this to be its intention, and tries to circumvent it by redefining the gift. "Can a gift be given?" 129-131.

[93] Jaques Derrida and Jean-Luc Marion, "On the Gift: a Discussion between Jacques Derrida and Jean-Luc Marion, Moderated by Richard Kearney," in *God, the Gift, and Postmodernism*, ed. John D. Caputo and Michael J. Scanlon (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999), 59.

King);[94] and its decisions are based upon a calculation of the return it will get. One could only have a gift if there were no giving subject seeking a reward from the act of giving (not even the self-congratulation of having given anonymously), and no recipient subject who would then be under an obligation to acknowledge the gift, nor even a gift object, whose presence is a constant reminder of the gift to the recipient.[95] "A subject will never give an object to another subject."[96] But it is not as though the subject and the gift were unrelated, for Derrida continues immediately: "But the subject and object are arrested effects of the gift, arrests of the gift."

In a similar way there is no theory of the gift, no essence or logic of it. Mauss had to write about everything but the gift, and it was when he was writing of the irrational (especially potlatch) that he was his most illuminating.[97] There is about the gift always a sense of the irrational, the excessive.

8.3.2 The gift and the subject in Thomas

Such an approach is by no means incompatible with that of Thomas. For a start, Thomas understands the gratuitous as that which exceeds reason.[98]

Perhaps more importantly, in his writings the subject does not precede the gift, but is constituted by it.[99] Our true subjectivity is a sharing in the subjectivity of

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[94] Derrida says: "The Sun and the King, the Sun-King will be the subjects [*sujets*] of these lectures." *Given Time I: Counterfeit Money*, tr. Peggy Kamuf (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 1-2; *Donner le temps I: la fausse monnaie* (Paris: Galilée, 1991), 11-12. As Derrida stops talking of the Sun-King after only a few pages, we should interpret this as meaning that the "subjects" who are spoken of in these conferences are subjects who behave like the Sun-King, whose life was contemporary with René Descartes and the appearance of the "Cartesian" subject.

[95] Derrida, *Given Time*, 23-24.

[96] Derrida, *Given Time*, 24.

[97] Derrida, *Given Time*, 38-39, 45-48.

[98] See 4.4.2.

[99] Of course, our understanding of subjectivity in Thomas is heavily indebted to Allard, whose study of the virtue of religion was undertaken in the light of the contemporary critique of the subject propounded by Derrida and others. Allard has eleven citations of Derrida in his introduction. *Que rendrai-je*, 5-29.

Christ. In Christ the gift, the fact of the union, does not come to a pre-existing human subject, but establishes that subject;[100] and the return gift which that subject makes is an offering of the humanity in which the humanity is itself dissolved, and Christ, as we have seen, can seek nothing for himself in his giving, but rather his subjectivity is constituted by giving totally for the sake of others, and his gift is a giving of his very subjectivity.[101] As we noted earlier, the sacrament splits into giving subject, receiving subject and gift object (the "arrests of the gift") only when it is a failed sacrament, one that does not give grace, one that is not a true gift.

Moreover, all this giving is somehow modelled on the giving in the Trinity.[102] There the Father gives the Son all that the Father is (the divine essence). But, given that the persons are subsistent relations, there is no subject "Father" or "Son" that can be thought of independently of or logically prior to the giving.[103] Derrida asks if "give" and its cognates would have a different meaning if what is given is that which one *is* rather than what one *has*.[104] Thomas makes a similar distinction, that unlike material goods, spiritual goods can be possessed by many at once, so that the giver does not need to relinquish the gift, and many can receive simultaneously - and this applies in a special way to our spiritual inheritance, which is called an inheritance because it is that by which God is rich.[105] Furthermore, although the material gift is received in an act of domination (paradigmatically food, which must be corrupted and become part of the recipient), spiritual gifts are incorruptible, and we receive them by being changed into them.[106] To that extent

[100] ST III.4.2-3.
[101] See 6.2.
[102] See 2.2.1, 4.2.3.
[103] ST I.40.3 cor.
[104] Derrida, *Given Time*, 48.
[105] ST III.23.1 cor, ad 3.
[106] *Super Ioannem* 6.3 (M895), which refers to 4.2 (M586).

they are gifts of identity.

On the other hand, for Thomas all human action is motivated by the desire for a reward: his morality is an economics. And yet we have seen that this economy is an economy of the gift. We shall see a little later that this does make a difference.

8.3.3 The gift and the counterfeit

Forsaking the rational, Derrida seeks the gift in fiction and in the sacrifice of Abraham, which is for him the paradigmatically unjustifiable act.

As regards fiction, the story Derrida looks at is Baudelaire's *La fausse monnaie*, which Derrida sees as being about the naturalisation of literary fiction itself.[107] Condensing his argument considerably, he notes four points in the story that are true of literary fiction as such.

The first is the tobacco shop, the starting point of the story.[108] Tobacco, as that whose purpose is to be consumed by fire and reduced to ashes, is a symbol of excess. Stories are traditionally told while smoking after dinner, or in similar times of excess.[109]

Secondly, he plays with the title itself, "La fausse monnaie," and its possible referents and meanings, to remind us that the counterfeit only works when it is not identified as such, but when it is unidentified, it works as well as that which it imitates would work.[110]

Thirdly, he notes that the structure both of this story and of literary fiction

[107] Derrida, *Given Time*, 169-170.
[108] Derrida, *Given Time*, 102.
[109] Derrida, *Given Time*, 107, 109, 111-115.
[110] Derrida, *Given Time*, 124-125, 127-128.

as such is to somehow provoke the events that it describes.[111]

Fourthly, he notes, reflecting on the interplay between the characters, that fiction invites and obtains trust or credit: it lends wings to the spirit. But, as we fly, we should remember Icarus, whose wings failed him because he flew too close to the Sun (the sovereign subject).[112]

We can start by suggesting that, when it comes to stories, the equivalent of excess in Thomas is inspiration, the gift (or spirit) of prophecy that enables the speaker to know what cannot be reached by rational inquiry.[113] Thus what Derrida applies to literary fiction in general, Thomas applies to the Bible. For Thomas one can find allegorical meanings in non-biblical literature, but these are either meant by the author, and thus are the literal sense, or else they are not intended by the author, and are merely "adaptations" that the reader makes without any real basis in the text.[114] For Scripture, the author not only narrates what happened, but the events themselves are arranged by God to convey a message: "Dum narrat gestum, prodit mysterium."[115] The narrative condition of scripture itself seems to call forth the action.[116]

Now, while a real event can also allegorically represent something else (as the manna, a real "food from the sky," represented Christ, the bread of life) there are also events in the Old Testament that are "counterfeit:" the carnal rewards and punishments that allegorically represent spiritual rewards and punishments, and yet lead to a belief that God is giving a gift, and elicit a response: to use Derrida's phrase,

[111] Derrida, *Given Time*, 151-154.
[112] Derrida, *Given Time*, 169-171.
[113] ST II-II.171.1 cor, II-II.171.5 cor.
[114] *Super Matthaeum* 1.5, cf *Super Ioannem* 12.7 (M1705).
[115] ST I.1 10 sed contra, citing Gregory.
[116] ST I-II.114.10 ad 1.

it may seduce into an *alliance* (covenant).[117] Moreover, the counterfeit differs from the real reward and defers the real reward, thus giving time. And Derrida insists that "What there is to give, uniquely, would be called time."[118] Time is necessary so that the Chosen People are ready for the coming of Christ, for the Law needs time to teach them both what needs to be done and that, on their own, they are incapable of doing it.[119]

8.3.4 The sacrifice of Abraham

For both Derrida and Thomas, the paradigmatic one who enters into the world of the gift is Abraham.[120]

8.3.4.1 Abraham's sacrifice as unspeakable

For Derrida Abraham exemplifies that the way to the gift lies through the irrational. Influenced by Søren Kierkegaard's reading of the sacrifice of Isaac, he emphasises the sheer unknowing with which Abraham acts.[121] This is an act beyond all calculation or justification. Such an act is only possible for one who believes in a personal God as ultimate reference. The motives for actions for Platonists, for whom the ultimate is the Good, an impersonal idea, will always be in terms of ideas, and

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[117] Derrida, *Given Time*, 112, *Donner le temps*, 144. For Derrida, the seduction is connected with "the desire as desire for tobacco and a certain work of mourning linked to the incineration of the remainder."

[118] Derrida, *Given Time*, 29, emphases removed. Further, Mauss confirms that what is given in the gift is time. 37-41.

[119] ST I-II..6 cor, ad 1, I-II.106.3 cor.

[120] Here we start relying on *The Gift of* Death, tr. David Wills (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995). In a "Prière d'insérer" at the front of the French edition (*Donner la mort* (Paris: Galilée, 1999)), Derrida insists that this is not the second volume of which *Giving Time I: the False Coin*, was clearly the first. However, Derrida of all people should know that an author's work is beyond the author's control.

[121] Søren Kierkegaard, "Fear and Trembling," in *Fear and Trembling; Repetition*, tr. Howard V Hong and Edna H Hong (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983).

therefore could be justified before others who grasped these ideas.[122] But Abraham is called by a personal God; he finds himself in a totally asymmetric relationship.[123] Within this personal call, no reason need be given. Abraham is silent about what he will do, not because he could speak and chooses not to, but because what he will do is unspeakable; no word can express it, even to Abraham.[124] As a consequence, Abraham can expect nothing from his action, not even the satisfaction of knowing that he has done the right thing, because he does not know this, and at the level of knowledge, of reason, what he is doing is unethical, even "monstrous."[125] The gift object is not given, but rather is to be destroyed in the giving. And the recipient is utterly unknown, unable to be objectified; indeed, even to consider God as a subject would be idolatry.[126] If subject A giving object B to subject C is the action which cannot possibly be a gift, then Abraham's sacrifice falls out of the zone of impossibility on all three counts.[127] If then Abraham does receive something - the return of his son - then this is not exchange within the old economy, but something quite other taking place in completely different register.[128] This new economy even restores the subject that was eclipsed in the act of giving, for in this economy God, as the condition of possibility of the interior secret that makes such giving possible, "is the absolute "me" or "self" [*est «moi» absolu*], he is that structure of invisible interiority that is called, in Kierkegaard's sense, subjectivity."[129]

[122] Derrida, *The Gfit of Death*, 60-63, cf 24-28.
[123] Derrida, *The Gfit of Death*, 72-73.
[124] Derrida, *The Gfit of Death*, 74.
[125] Derrida, *The Gfit of Death*, 85,
[126] Derrida, *The Gfit of Death*, 108.
[127] Derrida, *Given Time*, 11.
[128] Derrida, *The Gfit of Death*, 71-72, 94-95, 107.
[129] Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, 109, *Donner la mort*, 147.

8.3.4.2 The seduction of Abraham

There is something quite noble in this reading, where Abraham risks all for nothing, but its very nobility is its problem. It seems to place the initiative in generosity with Abraham, and it has lost sight of the role of the counterfeit. Thomas' reading places the initiative with God, because the call to sacrifice is in the context of the promise to Abraham that he would be the (fore)father of the Messiah.[130] As Abraham's line was to continue through Isaac, the call to sacrifice was irrational, but obedience to it meant an implicit faith in resurrection.[131] Similarly, it was a call to do the unethical except that God is in charge of life and death, and all human lives are forfeited to him on account of original sin, so that it is possible that another human being might be asked to carry out the sentence.[132] It is through these counterfeits that Abraham is given wings, and yet (if we can mix our metaphors) in mid-flight an angel stays his hand, and it is at this point, insists Thomas, that he realises that both the call to sacrifice Isaac and his being saved from death are figurative. [133] The command not to sacrifice enables a spiritual reading both of the command to sacrifice and of the saving of his son that the command not to sacrifice literally brings. Derrida has argued that the gift is the impossible, that we cannot decide to step outside the circle of the economy, but then holds that Abraham did so; this may explain his insistence that *The Gift of Death* is not the sequel to *Giving Time I*. Thomas is equally adamant about the impossibility of such a purposeful decision, but there is no paradox: Abraham was seduced.[134] Thomas insists that there is a real

[130] ST I-II.102.5 ad 1.
[131] *Super Hebraeos* 11.4 (M605).
[132] *Super Hebraeos* 11.4 (M604); cf ST II-II.64.6 ad 1.
[133] *Super Hebraeos* 11.4 (M606).
[134] Of course, Thomas does not say this directly, but he does present the impossibility of choosing spiritual goods because, turned to material goods, we do not know them, and he does speak of Christ as a "seducer" precisely in regard to this turning of desire. *Super Ioannem* 4.3 (M586), 7.2 (M1030-1032), with reference to Jer 20:7 "You have seduced me."

humiliation in accepting salvation through material things:[135] Derrida, by preferring to imagine that Abraham did the impossible rather than suffer the humiliation of seduction, has shown how potent the fear of that humiliation still is. Even Thomas seems to have struggled with it; otherwise, we might have had a clearer statement that the reasoning justifying a request from "God" to kill another in sacrifice ceases to be possible through the very movement from the carnal to the spiritual that Abraham underwent on Mount Moriah.

8.3.4.3 More abundant grace

This respect that Thomas has for Abraham and the other patriarchs and prophets, this insistence that their faith is the same as our faith, makes it hard to imagine the real difference between the sacraments of the Old Law and those of the New. Thomas' understanding of the power of grace pushes him to acknowledge full justification through circumcision, even though it threatens the necessity of the New Law which he wants to uphold.[136] We can see this also when he compares manna and the Eucharist: all who eat the manna and all who eat the Eucharist die bodily; all who eat the manna spiritually and all who eat the Eucharist spiritually gain spiritual life, so what is the difference?[137] Derrida, by highlighting the difficulty Abraham would have had in communicating his experience (even if he is a little excessive), and the difficulty of getting a counterfeit to work while at the same time recognising it as

[135] ST III.61.1 cor. Thomas here gives three reasons for the necessity of sacraments: to learn through our senses (as is natural), to be humiliated (cf the humiliation of the fires of purgatory *Summa Contra Gentiles* 4.90.4), and to be given good bodily exercises to keep us from bad ones, such as the cult of demons (Cf ST I-II.101.3.cor). We can consider Abraham's sacrifice as a similitude of a demonic cult, and thus humiliating as a reminder either of where he would be without grace, or of how before grace he was able to be seduced into this act and, in realising it was only figurative, to find grace. As this is a constitutive part of sacraments, we can now see why corporeal sacraments would have been inappropriate before the Fall, even though it is natural to learn through the senses. (ST III.61.2 cor)

[136] ST III.62.6 ad 3, III.70.4 cor, where Thomas gives the reason for his change of position.

[137] *Super Ioannem* 6.6 (M954)

counterfeit, shows how hard it would have been for the average Jew to have fulfilled the conditions that would make circumcision a profession of saving faith. And this helps us to understand what Thomas meant by saying that when the figure is replaced by the reality in Christ, there is "more abundant grace."[138]

For Derrida, because Abraham's experience is intrinsically irrational and incommunicable, there is no content to his faith; following Kierkegaard, faith needs to begin anew in every generation, not only in its act, but also in its content.[139] There can be no definitive revelation. Thus while Derrida has great admiration for the Sermon on the Mount as a "cardiotopology" (a teaching on where to place the heart), Jesus can no more bring us into the world of the gift than can Abraham; for if the word of the New Testament becomes law, we are still in an economy.[140] Derrida remains an Old Testament prophet (one of the most illuminating of the 20th century), urging us not to place our hearts in the counterfeits of outward things, and pointing to a world beyond. This is understandable in a Jew, but there are also traces of it in Chauvet.

8.4 Conclusion: Chauvet and Thomas

8.4.1 Economy or non-value?

In chapter two we laid foundations for the rest of our study of Thomas. By seeing the threefold nature of truth, we were prepared to understand later both that sacraments effect a threefold liberation, and also that Thomas is aware that the literal sense is not sufficient, that symbolism in the religious field is not a superfluous embellishment, but a true human need. The investigation of the *exitus-reditus* pattern

[138] ST III.74.4 cor.
[139] Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, 80.
[140] Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, 98, 109.

gave us a way of looking at reality that was not "productionist," and in which grace and gratitude would be an integral part of being a rational creature. In both cases we showed that there was substantial room for agreement between Thomas and Chauvet.

This was not the case in chapter three. I chose the term "economy" precisely to express the role that price and merit have in Thomas' account of human action. Therefore, when we investigated the gift in chapter four, and grace in chapter five, these were seen as refining our idea of the economy of human action and human interaction with God, not as alternatives to this economy. For Thomas, there can only be charity when there are things of great price; for Chauvet, symbolic exchange takes place in a realm that knows no price, and grace is not only a non-thing (with which Thomas would heartily agree), but also a non-value. Both of them see grace as gratuity that is not complete without a counter-gift, and yet the counter-gift is freely given; both of them see our human subjectivity constructed through ritual means; and yet these insights are received in two quite different ways.

In fact, Chauvet's approach to the gift and symbolic exchange does not come from Mauss, but despite of him. For Chauvet sets up an opposition between commercial exchange, where the value of the things exchanged matters, and gift exchange, as typified by the *kula*, which "is of a *completely different order* from that of the market place or of value."[141] It is not easy to square this with Mauss' remarks about the *vaygu'a* exchanged by the Trobriand islanders as "valuable and coveted," of a "superior and sacred nature. To possess one is 'exhilarating, comforting, soothing in itself'. Their owners handle them and gaze on them for hours."[142] Chauvet admits that he has been influenced by Jean Baudrillard.[143] In his theory

[141] Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 100.
[142] Mauss, *The Gift*, 22.
[143] Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 103-104

there are four "logics of value," but between the first three (usage value, exchange value and value/sign) and the fourth (symbolic exchange)

> there is no articulation, but radical separation and transgression, or eventual deconstruction of the forms which are the *codes of value*. Properly speaking, there is no symbolic "value," only symbolic "exchange," which is defined precisely as something else, and beyond value and code. All form of value (object, merchandise or sign) must be negated to inaugurate symbolic exchange. Here is the radical cut in the field of value.[144]

Admittedly, there is a marked difference between gift exchange and commercial exchange, but not one so radical. There also seems to be the implication that, unlike the other three, symbolic exchange is intrinsically virtuous in itself, but this contradicts the established phenomenon of "agonistic" exchange. Nor can gift exchnage be justified on the grounds that the obligation to return is "usually to a third party, who will in turn offer the return-gift to a fourth, and so on. Thus riches circulate endlessly from top to bottom, reaching all levels and all domains."[145] This alleged *return* to a third party is not found in Mauss;[146] although the original gift may be handed on to a third party (as in Ranapiri's example, and as in the *kula*), nonetheless, the original giver does not consider himself repaid thereby, but expects to receive his own counter-gift, as is the whole point of Ranapiri's discourse on the *hau*.[147] Chauvet is trying to give a justification for gift-exchange - reminiscent of the modern "trickle-down" arguments to justify capitalism - and it is significant that only here, in an excursus into utilitarianism, the objects exchanged are valuable ("riches").

Chauvet seems to be projecting an idealised antithetical opposite of

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[144] Jean Baudrillard, *Pour une critique de l'économie politique du signe* (Paris: Gallimard, 1972), 144, 147.
[145] Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 102.
[146] Except, in a later development, as alms to the poor as a way of repaying a god. Mauss, *The Gift*, 15-16.
[147] Mauss, *The Gift*, 8-10.

capitalist commercial exchange onto archaic gift exchange, without acknowledging that both are in need of transformation, which Thomas, with the whole tradition, does by using words such as "price" and "merit" in a way that subverts them. Interestingly, Chauvet himself recognises that the outright rejection of a traditional term that is highly susceptible to dangerous interpretations may create further problems in its wake. Although appreciating Girard's powerful insights (who would not?) he thinks that in eliminating (sacrificing?) sacrifice, Girard has deprived theology of a useful concept, of Christ's sacrifice as "quite a singular sacrifice" that can serve as an anti-sacrifice that both teaches generosity and yet counters the dangerous notions.[148] Yet, despite the Gospel parable, he insists, "there is no treasure in the field."[149] Instead, there is only work, and it seems that grace cannot even sweeten or lighten it, because grace is the work itself.[150]

Chauvet's denial of value could and probably should be read as the moment of negation before an affirmation by way of pre-eminence: value in the spiritual economy is totally different from value in the carnal economy. But Chauvet does not explicitly make this step; rather, he is very wary of any presence of God in a graspable way that could be construed as giving us some object from the spiritual realm that would have value.

8.4.2 Penance or reconciliation?

This difference has an effect when we deal with the subject matter of chapter six. We could put the difference very simplistically by saying that for Thomas sacraments are means by which we share in the subjectivity of Christ, for

[148] Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 302-308.
[149] Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 442.
[150] Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 440.

Chauvet we find receive our subjectivity in the Church, the body of Christ. The difference is subtle, and indeed as far as baptism goes, Chauvet could probably take any statement from Thomas and explain it in terms of his system. We do find a difference, however, when we come to the sacrament of penance.

Chauvet holds that the *res et sacramentum* here is reconciliation with the Church. [151] Admittedly, many others before him have said the same, but it particularly suits his sacramental theology, for it becomes an example of a symbolic exchange affecting our relation with the Church also bringing about a new relation with God, without anything being "caused." There are many reasons for holding this, not least that sin is an offence against the Church as well as against God, But there are problems, not mentioned by Chauvet, but at least referred to by other writers who adopt this position. Karl Rahner, for instance, notes that the *res et sacramentum* here is precisely the lifting of an excommunication;[152] and yet does not ask why it is also possible to have a re-admission to Holy Communion that is non-sacramental. For there are two such cases: the lifting of a formally imposed excommunication, and the reception of a baptized non-Catholic into full communion; in both cases, although sacramental confession is a preliminary to the action, the admission to communion is a non-sacramental rite. On the other hand, there is no non-sacramental rite that confers the *res et sacramentum* of the other sacraments, incorporating one into the Church, for instance, or conferring holy orders, or establishing an indissoluble marriage bond.[153]

Secondly, just as in the three cases mentioned above, although one can

[151] Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 432.
[152] Rahner, "Penance," 133-134, 136.
[153] One can have a non-sacramental marriage, say, between a Catholic and one non-baptized, but precisely as non-sacramental, this marriage does not create an indissoluble bond.

receive the *res sacramenti* through a *votum*, this does not entitle action that presumes the *res et sacramentum* - specifically, the unbaptized cannot be admitted to Holy Communion - so the theologian should justify the Church's position that in certain extreme circumstances a penitent sinner who cannot go to confession may nonetheless receive Holy Communion.[154]

Thirdly, for Chauvet it is the community that operates throughout the sacrament: the community welcomes the penitents, prays for them, and "the *minister*, acting as the servant of the Church's action, as the bearer of the assembly's 'symbolic capital,' pronounces the word of forgiveness," and does so performatively.[155] Admittedly, he does so under the authority of the absent God, but what he does in Chauvet's description is a juridical act which becomes sacramental because it is an act of the Church.

For Thomas, sin is an offence against God and God's honour because it violates God's order, and part of its pardon is for the order to be restored through an act of satisfaction. (If, as Chauvet insists, everything is symbolic, so also is sin, or rather, sin, as a failure to be, is a failure to symbolize, and so it needs to be addressed symbolically.) The role of the priest is to accept the contrition and confession of the penitent and, by the words of absolution, configure the satisfaction of the penitent to the satisfaction Christ offered on the cross. It is this that makes the action sacramental, for in every sacrament there is some configuration and conformation to Christ's passion.[156] Christ thereby reconciles us to God - and to the Church[157] (but

[154] Leeming refers to the exception, and justifies it not theologically but by an appeal to canon law. *Sacramental Theology*, 363. Rahner mentions the prohibition, but not the exceptions. "Penance," 131.

[155] Chauvet, 435.

[156] Cf *Scriptum* 4.26.2.1 obj 3 and ad 3. Although this is found in some writers who hold reconciliation with the Church to be the *res et sacramentum* (Leeming, *Sacramental Theology*, 363-364), the idea does not occur in Chauvet.

[157] As has been argued by Emery, "Reconciliation," 173-192.

not juridically: the lifting of a juridical excommunication requires a distinct juridical act). For Thomas the prohibition on receiving Holy Communion comes from mortal sin, not from an alienation from the Church as such. The sin can be forgiven before the sacrament (but not apart from the sacrament), which is why he allows reception of the Eucharist - in very restricted circumstances - with only the intention to go to confession.[158]

Of course, Christ is mentioned in Chauvet's account, but as absent; in Thomas' version he is present and active, and thus *spirans Amorem*. It is Chauvet's description of the sacrament that is more strongly institutional.

8.4.3 Spirit and institution

Chauvet ends up being more institutional because he tries to escape the juridical by seeking refuge in the symbolic, even though he has noted that symbols are both instituted and instituting. Just as gift-exchange can be agonistic and destructive, symbols can be oppressive, and one of the reasons for the development of the law and commercial exchange was to set people free from the burdens of a purely symbolic society. Chauvet is also right in holding that true freedom comes from the Holy Spirit,[159] but Thomas is right in insisting on the inseparability of the missions. Chauvet tries to make room for the Spirit by avoiding giving too much attention to Christ,[160] and this, combined with his anti-metaphysical bias, is why he says Christ is present in the sacraments in the mode of absence. But that leaves Christ present as authorising, and "merely" symbolically, and thus only through the institution as an institution. If a role for the Holy Spirit is then sought, it will either

[158] *Scriptum* 4.17.3.1.4 cor.
[159] Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 513.
[160] Chauvet, 468-470.

be to validate the acts of the institution (which Chauvet opposes) or to act against the institution, an interpretation to which Chauvet's statements about the Holy Spirit leave themselves open.

8.4.4 True bread

In chapter seven we explored the workings of the Eucharist in the light of Thomas' threefold understanding of truth. It was a study of Thomas on the Eucharist without referring to substance and accidents, except to note that, in his exposition of John 6, Thomas does not use the terms either. Rather than focussing on metaphysics, we looked at the symbols, and through them at economics. We saw how Thomas used the terms like "true bread" to redirect our desires and, through the Eucharist, to establish a spiritual economy to which the economy of bodily things would be merely accessory. We considered being enriched by an inheritance that is pledged to us. And we learnt how to recall Christ's passion, in which his blood was the price for our redemption and satisfied for us sinners. Such an exploration, understanding Thomas on his own terms, also puts us in a position to dialogue with Chauvet, who quite deliberately rejects the metaphysical approach in order to develop a symbolic one. We can begin by comparing how each of them reads the symbolism of bread.

Thomas, following the Gospel, starts at the most material level: hunger, toil, the desire for bread as desire for bodily life rather than bodily death, and uses analogy to talk of an as yet unidentified spiritual food offering eternal life, of which bodily food is only an pale imitation. The two work in a different way ("unlike ordinary food, you will be changed into me"). He thereby converts our desire to something that he identifies as the Word of God, doing God's will, and, in a

derivative way and surprising way, the Eucharist, given by the Son of Man. He then shows that this does not exclude being busy about bodily bread, but puts it into perspective. He also mentions another aspect that is not found in the text at that point, the unity of the Church. That the "true bread" is so different to bread made from wheat is essential to the working of this sacrament.

Chauvet mentions bodily hunger and desire for bodily life not to transform them or to seduce through them, but to leave them behind.[161] He presumes already a level of conversion in which it is the more symbolic aspects of bread that attract us, and then points out that these symbolic aspects are most fulfilled in symbolic exchange that includes God.[162] The sacrament no longer testifies to our conversion from bodily things to spiritual things. There is no transformation of desire taking place here, no conversion, no surprise, no humiliation, because there is no new object, no new way of working, even at a symbolic level, only an intensification of what was present. While Chauvet is strongly eschatological, his vision is one of the kingdom, not one of divinisation and seeing God "as he really is," whereas the promise of the beatific vision is an ever-present theme of Thomas theology.[163]

Chauvet has Catholic faith, and he realises that his theology, like all theology, fails to do justice to the msytery. He himself admits "This symbolic approach is obviously *insufficient* for expressing the significance of the Eucharistic presence. . . . We will never be able to pass from the offering of bread as a gesture of

[161] Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 396-397.
[162] Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 397-398.
[163] Labbé notes the absence of divinisation as a theme in Chauvet. "Réceptions théologiques," 412-413, 423-424. AN Williams holds that divinisation is a major theme for Thomas. "Deification in the *Summa Theologiae*: A Structural Interpretation of the *Prima Pars*," *The Thomist* 61 (1997): 219-255, and *The Ground of Union: Deification in Aquinas and Palamas* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

God's gracious gift to God's Eucharistic offering as the mediation of Christ himself."[164] Chauvet is right in saying that his symbolic approach should be judged on its own terms, rather than be condemned because it does not say what the metaphysical approach says;[165] but we can be critical when his use of the symbolic approach fails to do what Thomas does with a symbolic approach. If we start with Thomas' comments on John, we can then read the metaphysical approach we find in the *Summa* as explaining that a gift is really given. And if, like the Trobriand Islander, we want to gaze on our gift-object for hours, then, as Thomas specifically argues, transubstantiation guarantees that the Eucharist is worthy of true *latria*.[166]

8.4.5 Full of grace and truth - the value of causality

Walsh claims that Chauvet's attack on Thomas is something of a literary device, and I must admit that I am using Chauvet himself in a similar way.[167] This thesis is not about Chauvet, but about Thomas; Chauvet serves to place what I say about Thomas in the context of contemporary Catholic theology, to sharpen the questions and to establish common ground for dialogue. Chauvet acknowledges that words like *quasi* in Thomas indicate that the mystery he is trying to explain exceeds the categories of Aristotelian or any other metaphysics, and so provide a warning to any interpreter who thinks that the thought of Thomas can be neatly systematized; we also need to give full weight to Chauvet's protestations that his approach is "obviously *insufficient*," that "baptismal grace cannot be reduced *theologically* to the symbolic efficacy of a language act," that his proposal "is in no way a reduction of

[164] Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament,* 398. Emphasis in the original.
[165] Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament* 398-401.
[166] ST III.75.2 cor.
[167] Walsh, "The Divine and the Human ," 362n 15.

grace to the socio-linguistic mechanism of symbolic efficacy."[168] Like Thomas, Chauvet's work requires careful exposition, but that would require another doctoral thesis.

But to make use of this "literary device" one last time, what does Thomas gain (or lose) by appealing to the causality that Chauvet rejects? Putting the question another way, Thomas' motive is fidelity to the tradition: even if causality is an element of the tradition liable to misinterpretation, what is the danger of suppressing it?

Summarising what has been explained at greater length already, we can say that both would agree that the *res et sacramentum* takes place through a symbolic action that is somehow both an action of Christ (both recognise the need for institution by Christ) and an action of the Church. (Although this is weaker in Thomas, there still must be the intention to do what the Church does.) Furthermore, the formation of the *res et sacramentum* cannot be reduced to symbolic exchange at the anthropological level: both insist upon the role of the Holy Spirit. Chauvet is clear on this with regard to baptism and Eucharist; the case is not so clear with regard to reconciliation, but this is probably the point of the emphasis he makes on communal prayer: the reconciliation is not simply the work of the priest or the community acting in their own capacity. However, it is clear that, to make a generalisation, Chauvet prefers to consider the *res et sacramentum* in terms of one's place in the Church which is the body of Christ, whereas Thomas would consider it as a sharing in the priesthood of Christ that has some effect on one's place in the Church. In both cases it has a radical effect on our subjectivity. Both of them would also hold that what is taking place here can be described better in terms of signs or

[168] Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 398, 439, 443. Emphasis in original.

symbols rather than causes, and that what is produced is some sort of status or sign, or (a term both use) a consecration.

Both would also agree that this consecration is a gift, gracious and gratuitous, and that this gratuity and graciousness would be frustrated - more specifically, *we* would be frustrated - if there were not some grateful response: indeed, so great is the gift that the response must be one of our whole lives, a response will continue throughout our whole lives. Neither of them shrinks back from insisting that this response will be difficult because of the effects of sin remaining within us and in the world outside; nonetheless this difficulty finds meaning in the paschal mystery. This is where both would find grace, and neither of them would dare call grace a "thing." But Thomas says grace has been caused, whereas Chauvet recoils from using the word: what difference does this make?

We can examine the difference according to the threefold understanding of truth and liberation.

Truth sets us free from the figure and from slavery. If sacraments do not cause grace, Thomas says, then we have a situation like that under the Old Law, or like the one described by Derrida, and indeed Chauvet's continued talk of the absent Christ or the absent God is reminiscent of Derrida. The Old Law sacraments were described as weak, and to deny causality is to deny that from the sacraments there comes a power (*potentia* and not merely *potestas*) which can assist us to live as Christians. It is not surprising that Chauvet equates sacramental grace with work. And, despite his citation of Heidegger that before the God of ontotheology "humans can neither fall to their knees in fear, nor play instruments, sing or dance,"[169] joy is very rarely mentioned in *Symbol and Sacrament*.

[169] Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 62, citing Martin Heidegger, *Identité, Q. 1*, 306.

Truth sets us free from error and vice. This is perhaps best displayed by the two approaches to the Eucharist; only Thomas' approach seriously tackles the error of materialism. To deny causality would be to deny that God, working with material elements, transcends them, and so the sacraments would fail to teach us to set our heart on that transcendent end, whereas they should lead us from hunger for bread to hunger for the Word of God.

And truth sets us free from corruption and decay. Grace is a sharing in the divine nature, a pledge of the future glory of eternal life. It is not simply spiritual rather than corporeal goods that we set our hearts upon, but union with God. In this context we should note that, as a correlative to cause, Thomas also talks of the effects of the sacraments, and he divides them into primary (grace) and secondary (character or, presumably, any other *res et sacramentum*). In other words, there are priorities in the way we think about and celebrate the sacraments, and Thomas pushes these strongly. These priorities strongly relativise the *res et sacramentum*, be it membership of the Church, holy orders, the marriage bond, or even the Eucharistic body and blood of Christ. This is utterly consistent with his whole approach to human action, which is based upon the quest for divine beatitude, or that charity is above all love for God, and that we love ourselves and others in charity because God loves us and them. Chauvet has to stress that the Eucharistic *esse* is always an *ad-esse*, and in doing so would seem to downplay the presence it contains, its value, its adorability. Indeed, in a world where value is denied, the appearance of any value, the presence of any good, would be a danger. Chauvet locates the incarnation safely in the past, and believes that for the present God would not lead us into temptation or seduce us. In contrast, the economy Thomas presents to us is highly ordered, so that

anything of value comes from God, honours God and leads us back to God.

And there are in this world things of great price. For Christ has come, full of grace and truth, indeed overflowing with it. Sacramental causality claims that this overflow continues. Thomas insists on it - *et avec quelle force!*

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